

To John Sammon
with my sincere respect
and gratitude.

Francis T. Harvey..
Dec. 12, 1940.

MEDITATION

ON THE

PASSION

AND

EASTERTIDE

by F. P. H.

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FOREWORD

These meditations were compiled about a quarter of a century ago from the published sermons, meditations, spiritual treatises, and lives of Our Lord of such well-known English writers as Newman, Faber, Dalgairns, Hedley, H. Vaughan, J. Rickaby, and Mother Loyola, and arranged according to the method of St. Sulpice for use in the Seminary of New York. Greater use has been made of the imagination than is customary in the Society.

Some typewritten copies of this compilation are in private circulation in various parts of the Country.

F. P. H.

March, 1928.

PART ONE
THE PASSION

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THE PASSION

Adoration: Let me unite in my devotion with the group that first stood on Calvary. I am one with them at the foot of the Cross—first of all with Mary, then with John, with Magdalen and the rest. Around Mary the group has grown from age to age. It will never disperse nor cease to adore Christ Crucified.

I have (praised be God!) their faith in my breast. What mystery they saw with their eyes and handled with their hands I contemplate with my mind. I have still the substance of it; nay, I *see* it with their eyes.

“Jesum Christum crucifixum venite adoremus!”

Considerations: The Passion of Christ will create sorrow and love in my heart. The Passion is first of all a revelation of the *gravity of sin* in the sight of God. It tells me far more than I learn from Hell. Awful as Hell is, sin is beyond

any punishment that God could exact from a mere creature. It is "*contra Deum*". It is not man, but the Son of God who suffers for it to the full. If God had forgiven sin without the redemption, we should not have had the awe, the heart-felt sorrow that comes from the Cross. We should have lacked the full revelation of the greatness of God and the greatness of sin and we should grow demoralized. Before Our Lord suffered, men could not have realized all that sin is, nor have felt towards it as *we* can. "*Delicta quis intelliget?*" cries the Prophet. The early Christians, with Christ Crucified before their eyes, realized the guilt of sin "*post Christum et contra Christum*". They felt it to be what, in a true sense, it is—a mockery of Christ and the crucifying of Him ever again in their hearts.

Why, then, have I, with Christ crucified before my eyes, no great horror of sin or loathing? Why do I not turn from it with indignation? It is because I do not *meditate* upon the bitter Passion of the Son of God.

The Cross, moreover, can create *love* as well as sorrow in the breast. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." Christ Crucified can seize upon my affections and lift me up to Him by force of divine love. Fire melts ice; the sun unfolds the flowers. The Cross can melt the hardest heart and draw out the tenderest affections. The Bleeding Form distills a softening and subduing unction. It is an appeal to the heart by Him who made the heart. The world has made me heedless, and sin has made my heart callous, but the Cross can counteract this hardness of heart, and work mighty changes in me. But I must first draw near to the Cross. It is not enough to "pass by the way", I must "*attend and see*". Peter was converted by a look from Jesus in His Passion; the thief on the cross by the study of Christ Crucified; the centurion was won to the faith, and the crowd awed and stricken with remorse by the spectacle of His death. I must contemplate Him *perseveringly* till some light from His countenance irradiates me, and

some pang of sorrow from an open Wound pierces my heart.

There are helps enough given me to know Christ crucified. His bodily sufferings are all summed up in the Crucifix itself as it meets my eyes; they are represented all at once on His Sacred Flesh as it hangs on the wall before me. But I do not fix my attention upon it; I see it but do not *look* upon it. The mystery itself is hidden. My eyes are held by a veil of sense, as though a cloth covered it. I need to be impressed. And so, as Passion-tide comes round the tender figure that has looked down upon me with pity and affection all the year long, is covered with purple. Then, as I begin to grow lonesome for the sight of it, comes Good Friday, and the veiled Crucifix is tenderly stript, member by member, before my eyes, and is left at the foot of the Altar to speak to my heart. I press my lips to the Blessed Feet that were nailed for my sake to the bitter Cross. This is the only approach to Holy Communion allowed me on that day, but it is enough. How powerful

a spell the sight lays on my heart! "Omnis enim figura ejus amorem spirat, et ad redamandum provocat, caput inclinatum, manus expansae, pectus apertum." The hidden mystery opens before my mind, and for one brief day the Crucifix does speak to me. But why, alas, do I lose so quickly my intimacy with the Crucifix? It is because I do not *meditate*. The Passion is summed up in the Crucifix, but to understand the Crucifix I must have traveled through the stages of the Passion step by step. The transcendent depth of woe does not immediately affect me, from the very greatness of it. I sum it up in a few words, and speak without understanding. How true, in this instance, is the saying, "Who says the whole has not said *all*". The words "Our Lord died for me on the Cross", though they express the mystery, mean little to me till I have examined My Saviour's sufferings one by one. Meditation on the Passion to be effective must be detailed.

Holy Church strives thus to have me meditate. In the Rosary she holds up the

Passion before me in five great views. She draws out upon the walls of the church the way marked by the trailing Cross and the reddened footprints from the Pretorium to Calvary. In Holy Week she makes me listen, standing, to every word in the Passion-chapters of the Gospels, and renews the mystery before my eyes in her sacred offices.

And thus it was, too, that holy men have ever meditated on Christ Crucified. They found a separate ground of love, a separate expression of the inward holy loveliness which won them, impressed on His broken and adorable Body throughout. Each pain was part of the determinate counsel of the Father, part of the loving acceptance of the Son, and named by Him, one by one, as in a litany, as He goes up to Jerusalem to endure them. Each wound had its own treasure of divine mercy, its own antidote to sin. They, in spirit, put in their finger and saw His Hands, mightier to aid because bound to the tree; they felt themselves encircled within the outstretched, all-encompassing Arms of His mercy; they

fell at His wearied and stiffened knees, and their own feeble knees were strengthened; they bathed with tears His transfixed Feet, that so He might forgive the mournful liberty and wanderings wherewith their own had gone astray; but chiefly they were drawn to the very abyss of His unsearchable love, His pierced Side and His opened Heart. The opening of the Side has united heart to Heart. The full force of God's love operates directly from that opening. It has laid bare His Heart.

Self-Examination: Why am I not moved, then, when I hear of the bitter Passion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for me? I have neither bewailed my sins which caused it, nor have had keen feelings about it. I have not suffered *with* Him. I have been used to let Lent go almost like any other season. I went to Church, I heard, and then went away again; not distressed at all; or, if distressed, only for a moment. I have not carried the thought of Him who died for me along with me,—with me wherever I

am. I have had no overflowing gratitude, keep sympathy, fervent love, profound awe, bitter self-reproach or earnest repentance. Passion-tide and Good Friday have passed by and left me just what I was,—not at all nearer Christ in my heart and life, not impressed lastingly with the thought of His mercies and my own sins and demerits.

But why is this? Why do I so little understand? Why are my eyes so dim, my ears so hard of hearing? Why have I so little faith? For this reason, because I *meditate* so little; I do not meditate and therefore I am not impressed. Christ is gone away; He is not seen; I never saw Him, I only read and hear of Him. It is an old saying, “Out of sight, out of mind”. So it *will* be, so it *must* ever be with me, as regards Our Blessed Saviour, unless I make continual efforts day by day and all through the day to think of Him and His sufferings.

How base and miserable am I for understanding His sufferings so little, for being so little impressed by them! Alas! if I

felt them as I ought, of course, it would be to me, at seasons such as this, far worse than the death of a friend is, or his painful illness. I should not be able as Holy Week draws on to take pleasure in this world; I should lose my enjoyment of things of earth; I should lose my appetite, and be sick at heart, and only as a matter of duty eat, and drink, and go about my work. It would be a week of mourning, as when a dead body is in a house. I cannot, indeed, thus *feel*, merely because I wish and ought to feel. But though I cannot at my will thus feel, and at once, I can *ask* Our Lord for this grace at once.

Petition: O Blessed Saviour, I now ask Thee for the grace that marks off Thy elect from the world that perishes—the grace to know Thee Crucified. I desire to gaze upon Thy Cross and be saved. I do not deserve this signal grace; nay, I have forfeited it by my coarse and heedless life. But when hast Thou treated me as I have deserved?

Hear me for Thy mercy's sake! Hear Thy Most Holy Mother who pleads for me!

Do for me what I cannot do for myself!
Give me, first, the grace to meditate.

Resolutions: By Thy grace I will recall, morning by morning throughout Lent, the remembrance of Thy Blessed Passion. Enable me to do this, I beseech Thee. Bless the doing so, and make me to do so in a simple-minded, sincere, and reverential spirit.

And, if I am faithful, give me, as time goes on, great tenderness for Thy sufferings, and those deep feelings which holy men have. And, meanwhile I shall strive to observe such an outward abstinence from the innocent pleasures and comforts of life as may prepare me for thus feeling; such an abstinence as I should spontaneously observe if I did thus feel. And so make me grow in the spirit of gratitude, love, holy fear and repentance.

Bouquet: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend and see!"

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Adoration: View with awe the solemn scene which the chance light of the moon brings to view in the Garden of Gethsemane. It is the Son of God who is bowed down to the earth yonder beneath the olive's shade, and this is His agony. Recall Our Lord's complaint to his Apostles, "Could you not watch one hour with me?" Ask in the name of Mary and her sorrows, for the unearthly power to enter somewhat into this mystery, this morning.

Considerations: From His conception Our Lord had looked forward to this moment. He desired to pay the ransom for men. His love put compulsion on Him. There was a fire of love shut up in His Heart, which was a very pain to Him till it could find a vent in outward suffering; and He longed for His baptism of blood. And now the time is come and He advances into the Garden of Gethsemane. Yet behold, at the very moment when all

is ready, when Heaven and earth are waiting in solemn silence for the spectacle, before an enemy has come in sight, or a hand been raised against Him, the mighty Victim falters and trembles. As the shades of night close around Him, by the light of the paschal moon, His disciples gaze in wonder upon His pallid features and sinking frame, and listen in dismay to that voice which had awed multitudes into silence, now sunk to its gentlest accents and proclaiming that His soul was "sorrowful even unto death".

Oh, miserable race of man, is the only heart which has loved thee as yet with untiring and unconquerable love about to desert thee at last? Or is the will of Jesus subject to change, that now, when the chalice He had longed for is close to His lips, He puts it aside? He is plainly suffering a sinking of heart, and weariness, disgust and repugnance—the last miseries of human nature.

How fearful these are we well know. Unreasonable as they are, they outweigh the strongest arguments; involuntary as

they may be, they wear out in time the most indomitable will. When they are away, martyrdom is an easy task. It is these which make temptation strong and unnerve the soul. Yet it is with these the soul of Jesus has now to contend. It was, however, by no blind instinct that He suffered them. No one could take His soul from His own control. He willed to suffer as men suffer. Therefore, He gives the word and all at once His soul which a moment before was lying in majestic calm, seems stirred from its very depths by a mighty tempest. And all at once as you watch His figure moving among the silent olive trees, He falls down to the ground like a man with a burden on him heavier than he could bear.

Jesus has stripped Himself of the sensible strength of His divinity. You might think He was dead, were it not that the audible beating of His Heart proclaims the agony within.

But what is it that bows down the Almighty Son of God? What is it that so terrifies and overwhelms Him? What is

it that thus convulses Him from head to foot? See how He trembles! His flesh quivers, and at length out of its pores comes a dew. It is red and trickles down Him, and falls heavily on the ground. It is His Precious Blood, and this His agony.

He is about to die for the world, and now He is contemplating what kind of world it is. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." The *whole world!* What a burden upon Christ! He has turned His inward gaze upon what He knows of all the sin that had been, and was then, and was to be till the day of judgment.

Remember, there is pent up within His Breast a fiery love of souls, a passion to save all, an absolute readiness to suffer anything rather than to see *one* perish. Do not forget that this love in His Heart is neither more nor less than the love of God for the creatures He has made. And now think of the vision that confronts Him. Instead of the gentle moon looking down from Heaven on the whispering trees, there rises before Him in that dark valley

the very pit of hell, and its hungry flames fed with the flesh and blood of those for whom He is to suffer. He cannot save them because they will not be saved. He thought how useless would be His sufferings for so many of the guilty race. And after all, how poor would be His triumph! When He was dead, and gone to Heaven, what uphill work for His religion! a miracle is needed to convert the world, and a fresh one to keep His faith alive to the world's end. He sees His saints persecuted, He sees weak Christians falling from Him; truth, at times, all but dying out, and heresy all but triumphant; the good men cowardly and the bad men brave. Even the sight of the mass of Christians in the state of grace, add poignancy to His agony. What He had a right to expect was a passionate love of God, and He finds it feebly struggling with the love of self. What He wished for was compassion with Himself and His Blessed Mother but He sees His suffering forgotten, or remembered as men think on dead relatives whom

they have never seen, and whose benefits they enjoy.

And is it for such a world as this He is going to die? An awful repugnance rises within Him, and He craves for human sympathy. He rises wearily to His feet and goes seeking comfort from His own. He bends over His three Apostles, and lo, they are asleep! His friends leave Him to His lonely struggle, and, with a melancholy cry, He goes back to His prayer, un comforted. He goes back in weakness from His priests. Three times He comes to them, and the third, as He emerges from the deep shadow of the olive trees, His face is deathly pale. His sickening gaze is now fixed on the pit of Hell, and or horror, some ghostly shapes are there struggling in the grasp of demons, and they are marked with a priestly vocation! He can bear no more, and He sinks to the earth, prostrate in pitiful agony. And now the ground is stained with His blood. He bleeds from no visible wound, nor yet from mouth or nostril. He sweats blood. His Heart gives out its red life, as in a

wine press. Drop by drop, unnaturally through the burning pores of the skin, the beads of blood ooze out. Christ is in the throes of atoning contrition. He bleeds with grief and horror—"toto corpore lacrymatus est Christus".

Self-examination: Dear Jesus, among the sins that tormented Thee were the sins of my life. They were more present and vivid to Thee than they have ever been to me when I have brought up my life in a general confession. And who has ever been so cruel towards Thee as I? If only I had had a little thought, a little feeling, a little self-denial I could have spared Thee. I was brought up in the knowledge of the Passion, I was early taught the meaning of the crucifix—I could have relieved Thy intolerable agony: and I would not! It is done now. Here is the bitterness of my life.

Petition: Oh Jesus, dear Saviour of men, when my heart is hard and sorrow comes but slowly, let me find my way over the brook of Kedron, up the slope of Olivet into the lonely Garden of the Agony, and

there learn what the sins of my life and the absolutions of my life have cost Thee. Give me the grace, sometimes to "watch one hour with Thee".

Resolution: Whenever I am tempted to sin, let me say to myself, "There would be another pang in the Heart of Jesus on Olivet; this would be an added bitterness to His Chalice, I will not ask Him to drink *this*". And if, through Thy grace, I resist, dear Lord, let me be consoled by the thought that I have spared Thee at least one additional grief on the night of desolation.

If I think, then, of Olivet, I will never sin; if, sometime, I look with adoring compassion upon Thy pale and agonizing face, and kneel, in imagination, in the crimsoned grass of Olivet, I shall crush down in my heart every temptation, every movement to sin.

Bouquet: "Non potuisti una hora vigilare mecum?"

THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR

Adoration: It is not enough to have glanced at a picture of Jesus at the pillar of scourging or to have read of it. I must see; I must feel it.

See the leathern thongs, weighted with jagged points of bone and lead. They are the scourges—the Roman “flagella”. Handle them, and think how they will rend and bruise and tear when wielded by the strong arms of soldiers. Recall what is told of this awful chastisement, as, for example, the sight of the martyrs of Smyrna, described in the pages of Eusebius. “All around were horrified to see them, so torn with scourges that their very veins were laid bare, and the inner muscles and sinews, and even the very bowels, exposed.”

Now, repeat slowly and with awe, “Then Pilate, therefore, took Jesus and scourged Him”. (St. John XIX, 1.)

Try to bring home the thought that He who suffered *was God*. My God, give light to my mind that I may see in this mystery what Thy saints have seen, and come to understand and take to heart the lesson given me here at such a cost.

“Sancta Mater istud agas,
Crucifixi fige plagas,
Cordi meo valide.”

Considerations: The infliction of bodily pain and intentional shame is revolting to dwell upon. The mystery of the scourging is heart-sickening, but my sins made it so; I have then no choice but to come to the suffering Flesh of Christ. “Christo igitur passo in *carne* et vos *eadem* cogitatione armamini.” (1 St. Peter IV, 1.)

I. We expect *sorrow*—because we sin, but we do not expect *pain*.

Reason does not take masterful hold of bodily pain; it is hard to bear, and, for the most part, *involuntary*. We suffer because we have to suffer. Jesus, however, would have bodily pain in His Passion in its most piteous and distressing forms;

and as He willed it, so would He bear it.

Men seek relief from pain in distraction—fixing their thoughts elsewhere—or in drugs, thus deadening the sense of it. But Jesus would look pain in the face. He would not drink the drugged cup. He willed to have the full sense of pain, and offered His whole Mind to it, receiving it, as it were, directly into His Bosom. Reflect now that He knew all things that should come upon Him. The scourging, therefore, was never absent from His mind; it was one of the distinct features of His Passion of which He spoke beforehand.

He is going up to Jerusalem, and the Gospel tells us that He walks before His Apostles in the road (“*Praecedebat eos*”.) They lag behind in fear; they scarcely keep pace with Him now. He waits for them, and tells them the thoughts that are drawing Him to the city.

And what are they? The Son of Man shall be betrayed, mocked, spit upon, *scourged*, crucified!

II. See now at the foot of the marble steps leading from the balcony of the governor's hall, a large court paved with stones. At one end a low pillar with an iron ring in the top. It is the pillar of the flagellation. Jesus is bound to it by the wrists in a stooping posture. I see him waiting with pallid countenance the first stroke. I gaze with adoring awe on His Body worn with poverty and at His Host-like Flesh, tender with more than human sensitiveness, every nerve surcharged with delicate feeling. And now the first soldier, animal as flesh and blood can be, takes his stand, lash in hand, behind Him.

Think of the stinging injustice of it! If rough men were to take a little child, expose its innocent flesh and scourge it in turn with all their might, feasting the while on its writhing agony, imagine how the world would burn with indignation. Now answer; who is more innocent, Jesus or a little child? He is the Innocent One who did no sin, who is holy with the holiness of God—and Pilate orders Him to be

scourged as though that were nothing. The scourging should be thorough, so that all should cry, "It is enough". Jesus should henceforth be abject and disgraced forever, for it was not possible to be a man and wear such stripes.

Look for an instant into Heaven, and see the amazement and note the silence there. Can it be that the shameful and degrading punishment reserved for slaves is to be endured by the Only Begotten Son of God! He knows what is due to Himself. But He knows, too, that the chastisement of our sins is fallen upon Him, and that by His bruises we are to be healed.

Self-examination: The shame of the scourging gathers round me, and I am hardly able to hold up my head. I pray about it with my eyes shut as if by instinct! The sight of the instrument is horrible. The muscular violence and the comonplace air of the soldiers offend my very thought. And now the sounds—monotonous yet various—as the thongs become soaked with blood—who can abide

them? Though my eyes are closed, I see the ferocious countenances, the knotted arms of the men—denaturalized by the brutality of their task.

Him I do not see, even with the eyes of the soul; for I have thrown myself on the pavement in His Blood.

Oh my Jesus, it is *I* who scourge Thee! My sins are the whips! How hateful I grow to myself in Thy bleeding presence.

Thy innocent Flesh suffers for my sinful flesh. Thou givest Thyself up for me. For every shameful thought, word, act of mine, blow after blow descends upon Thy shrinking form; blows falling on open wounds and exposed nerves in unrelieved pain. I count up my sins in the bitterness of my heart, one by one, as each stroke is given. Yes, He has taken my sins, and all Holy though He is, He now bears the image of them in His body. He is a condemned criminal—the scourge has touched Him. How changed He looks after the scourging! He looks like some outcast or outlaw

who has frightful guilt upon Him. He has been "made sin" for me. "Vidimus eum et non erat aspectus." "Novissimus virorum."

I have deserved stripes—nothing less for my coarse sins—but the reverend, pure and tender shoulders of Jesus receive my punishment. "And by His bruises we are healed."

Petition: O hateful love of pleasure, which turns me from Thee, keeps my heart without piety, degrades me, plunges me even into mortal sin!

Exorcise me, O Lord Jesus, by the burning fire of Thy scourging. Or at least let me draw near to Thy pillar, to Thy streaming Blood, that I may be strong to suffer all things for Thy sake, rather than offend Thee in one *iota*.

Resolutions: O God, my Saviour, what must my soul be worth to have been bought at such a price! For I know the meaning of this awful scene. It is to expiate my sensuality that Thou art so shamefully used. Sensuality has ever made men hard and cruel. By Thy bruises I am healed.

It is to win me to sorrow for my sins by showing me the punishment they have deserved. What ought I to do after this? Can I see Thee making such reparation for me and not desire to make some satisfaction myself?

Give me then a true interior sorrow for my sins, especially for any pampering of my body which has brought Thee to this. Draw me to gratitude and love, to, at least, a little appreciation of what Thou didst suffer for me at the pillar. What have I done up to this day to draw the fiery sting from Thy torn back or to salve the gaping wounds that are in Thy virginal Flesh because of my sins? Holy men have inflicted sharp pain on their bodies. If I cannot do so much as this, grant me at least to bear in my body, this day, some act of self-denial—and thus “to fill up”, as the Apostle says, “the things that are wanting” of Thy sufferings—the little measure Thou hast left to my love to supply. Have patience with the present dullness and coldness of my heart; with the poor return which is all it can now make Thee for

Thy love; one day I will pay Thee more.

Bouquet: "He was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins."

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

Adoration: Behold Our Saviour as a mock King, meek and humble, with that cruel circle on His brow.

See the soldiers marching before Him, genuflecting as they pass, insulting Him and crying, "Hail, King of the Jews". Hear the laughter, the uproar, the blasphemy.

Note the silence of Christ.

Now is the moment to be true to Jesus; to offer Him the worship of the heart.

Repeat slowly "the good confession", just made before Pilate, "Art Thou a King?"

"Thou sayest that I am a King." (St. John XIX, 37.)

Men had striven once to make Him a King of earth, but He fled away. He did not wish the crown of Herod. He desired the empire over souls. Now he accepts at their hands the symbol of His new Kingdom—the crown of thorns, the purple

mantle and the reed. And thus would He draw men to Him. Thus would He begin to reign over us. "Thy Kingdom come!"

"Christum regem spinis coronatum, venite adoremus."

Considerations: It has gone among the soldiers that Jesus laid claim before Pilate to royalty. Here is inspiration for a barrack-yard pastime. There shall be a coronation. A suitable crown and sceptre and robe are at hand. The sport is worth while, and the whole band is ready to enter into it. They lead Jesus to a seat, and throw around His shoulders an old purple cloak to serve as a royal mantle. They put a reed in His hand for a sceptre of power. One of them has seen a thick briar growing nearby. They cut a branch, and, taking care not to hurt their hands, twist it into a kind of a crown with sharp points within and without. They put it on His head and beat it down with the reed.

I must be real. I am not drawing from a book of romance but from the Gospel; I am not gazing on a picture in

a frame, but on Jesus in the flesh. "And ^{and} plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head." (St. Matt. XXVII, 29.) Look at the hard, sharp thorns grown in the arid sin-blighted earth—suppose a thorn, ever so slight, were to make its way into my temple, what a torment it would be! My Divine Saviour has His delicate head pierced all round; the imbedded thorns are moved about by rough usage, and are pushed in violently with blows. "They took the reed and struck His head." (St. Matt. XXVII, 30.)

Draw near and gaze with an inward look into that face. There is something inexpressible about it which I cannot solve. Before its blood-stained beauty all other beauty dies. It is at once most venerable, yet most childlike, most calm, most sweet, most modest, beaming with sanctity and with loving kindness. His tear-dimmed eyes rivet me and move my heart. Oh, I will look upon that face forever, and will not cease. And I see suddenly men come to Him, first one and then another in a long line, and raise their hands and

sharply strike Him on that heavenly face. They are hard hands, the hands of rough soldiers. And some, leaning forward spit upon it with impure lips. All bow the knee before Him, and exclaim, "Hail, O King of the Jews!"

Our Lord is not, now, blindfolded, as when, last night, He was mocked as a false prophet. He sees the kind of homage paid Him, and how men amuse themselves with the last hours of His life. The insults could not be so sudden as to take Him by surprise who knows all things, past and future. He sees the blows and the spitting preparing for Him; He lifts no shielding arm, and He turns not away His face. How helpless He has made Himself! When they snatch the reed from His hand, He yields it up; when they give it back, He opens His hand to receive it. He endures all in silence, and shows no sign of resentment, remaining calm and grave as before; but the expression of His face is marred; a great disfigurement arises and conceals it from me, as if a cloud came over it.

If these wretched men could have been capable of thought, they might have had misgivings of some great mystery, they might have feared to go too far. But no, is not the whole world with them? Did not a real king question this man, an hour ago, and then make Him a court fool in a white robe? A King, forsooth, in peasant garb, without a foot of land or a follower, without statecraft or speech, with fresh scourges of shame in His flesh! They have no King but Caesar. What is a King to them that is not of this world! Alas! How is the doomed world taken in its pride! How animal-like is unregenerate man in the presence of God's mysteries!

Could men have come nearer to God than when they seized Him, struck Him, spit on Him, hurried Him along, stripped Him, stretched out His limbs upon the Cross, nailed Him to it, raised it up, stood gazing on Him, jeered Him, gave Him vinegar, looked close whether He was dead and then pierced Him with a spear?

O dreadful thought, that the nearest ap-

proaches man has made to God upon earth have been in blasphemy! O who shall say what was later their amazement and despair when they came the moment after death into the presence of the Judge of the living and the dead, and "Looked upon Him whom they pierced".

Self-examination: These were not demons but men—men of like flesh and blood with me.

And I have that in me which prompted them to mock Jesus in their day. It is my pride. It startles me to feel how like I am, at moments, to them with my hard, proud heart and unbelieving mind. Nay more, as often as I have indulged my pride I have been of them. Dear Saviour of the world, I, too, have given Thee a pretense of service, of homage and of devotion. I have had my place in the long line of mocking men who passed before Thee in the court of Pilate.

Day by day, the thought grows on me, how great has been my share in Thy sufferings.

Petition: Dear Jesus, I begin to see

beneath the mantle of affliction, the painful crown, and the blood-stained cheek, Thy supreme majesty. Thou *art* a King. Thou art reigning in power, though a reed be the sceptre in Thy hand. No treason, nor shame, nor hurt can provoke Thee. Thou art reigning in the realm where kings of earth are weak. Thou art conquering ignominy and pain with Thy sweet Spirit, and breaking the power of the demon and of the world by Thy humility, and drawing men to “come after” Thee. O virtue of my Thorn-crowned King come out from the Sacred Heart and transform this heart of mine! Penetrate my intellect and will, burn up my wilfulness,—my bitterness of judgment,—my independence of spirit,—my self-esteem.

Draw me beneath Thy gentle rule. And in the hour when smarting thorns come to pierce my sensitive nature, give me strength to welcome them, and to grow by slow degree more and more like Thee.

Bouquet: “Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine.”

THE DENIAL BY PETER

Adoration: See Our Lord leave the Supper Room with His Apostles. It is already dark. The gloom of a chilly night has crept into their hearts, and they move on in silence. The Apostles see that some unwonted grief is pressing on Jesus. "What is this about?", they must be thinking. "What is going to happen?" Now He pauses, and they gather round Him, and He tells them His thoughts. He is thinking of their faithlessness. "You will all be scandalized in Me, this night."

There is, then, a wound in the Sacred Heart inflicted by "His own, whom He had chosen". I address my adoration to that wound. The faithful, dear Jesus, will remember Thy other wounds and griefs; will pour over them in sorrow and anoint them with soothing love; but Thou dost look to *me*, here.

St. Peter carried in his heart throughout life the thought not of wound made by

thorn or nail, by scourge or lance, but the grief himself had caused Thee in Thy lonely Passion.

Dear Mother of God, make me sensitive to this hidden pain, and give me a share in your insight, to meditate on this special sorrow of Our Lord. For I, too, am marked with a priestly vocation, and I, too, have wounded Our dear Lord in His inmost Heart by my sins.

THE FALL OF ST. PETER AND HIS RESTITUTION

Considerations: It is the night of the seizure, and Our Lord is held in the house of the high-priest.

Let me watch the scene proceeding in the court below. There is a chill in the air, and an uncanny feeling is abroad; the soldiers have been on strange business this night. A fire is burning and a circle of faces presses round to share its warmth. There are two of Our Lord's Apostles. Peter is one. The flame falls on his face, and a serving-maid recognizes the strongly

marked features, and pointing a finger in his face, says in the hearing of all, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth".

I. It is a sharp challenge; the very moment is come to choose for or against Our Lord. It is a great crisis in his life, but alas, he is unequal to it. He had spoken brave words a few hours ago, but it is under trial that one finds out how weak one is. The sudden charge is too much for Peter; his heart sinks, and he falters out, "I know not the man".

Withdrawing into the shade to escape further notice, he stumbles upon another recognition and into another denial. Wretched beyond measure, yet held by his very misery to the spot, he is not equal to a third recognition, and denies, this time, with cursing.

How grief-stricken Our Lord is, surely He has sorrows enough without this! The familiar friend, to whom He has showed Himself in His glory, for whom He prayed especially, and whom He chose above the rest to be His Vicar,—not once only but

three several times denies Him, and swears in His very presence, that he knows Him not. Peter casts shame on Our Lord, as on one too low to have a friend. He would not have his name linked with an outcast, and he separates himself from Him. He is ashamed of Christ before men,—“scandalized in Him”.

In St. Peter's fall there was self-confidence and lack of prayer. He fell through presumption; he leaned too much on self; he trusted in his long intimacy with Our Lord, and in the great things he had done. He moved in the priest's atmosphere of exaltation, of privilege, of miracle and of the notice and homage of men, and this was his danger. He grew to think he could not fall, “Though all shall be scandalized,” he said, “yet *I* will not be scandalized”. He reckoned too much on his rugged character and stout heart. “Even though I should *die* with you”, he insisted, “I will not deny you”. He should have said, “I'd be the first to fail you;—I'm a coward at heart. ‘*Adjuva incredulitatem meam.*’ ” He could, indeed,

have laid down his life for Our Lord in a burst of feeling; man, now and then, can do a heroic turn; but Peter's struggle is not with flesh and blood but with an invisible enemy who is watching for a weak moment, when he will be off guard, and who will attack him in a mean way.

Satan "desired to have" Peter. How he desires the fall of a priest! If a general is killed, a thousand men are thrown out of action. It was a bold move to have attempted the destruction of the chosen one of Christ. But had he not Judas already in his grasp? Perhaps he could get Peter, too: himself had been an archangel and had fallen. And he *will* get him, if he can come between Peter and his Lord.

Our Lord drew towards Peter with an intense movement of heart as the danger threatened: an Apostle needs great graces, for he runs great danger, from within or without. He forewarned him distinctly, and strengthened him by the glorious vision on the Mount; then He took him into the Garden of Olives that he might see and hear how temptation is to

be met, and where man's strength lies. But Peter slept when he should have prayed. "Peter, sleepest *thou*?" Our Lord pleaded. He roused himself, indeed, at the approach of the mob and struck out with his sword at an oncomer, but he soon fled away in fright, and, though he afterward recovered heart a little, and followed Our Lord "afar off" he comes now to incur a worse guilt by denying Him outright.

The demon has prevailed over the chief Apostle. Hell is in an uproar; Peter has fallen and the plans of Christ are upset; the rock on which He willed to build is blown away, at the breath of a woman, like a hillock of sand before the tempest.

II. Peter had not prayed, but *One* had prayed for him whose prayers are always heard; "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Peter is a priest, an Apostle, and Our Lord holds to him with an intense love! "No one shall take *them* out of my hand."

Peter still lingers in the court; above is the gallery and Jesus is there. And see!

the Saviour forgets His own bitterness, and turning full about *looks* on the fallen Apostle. Peter had no right to that look; it was a look of *mercy*; it alone saved him from the fate of Judas. Now the eyes of Jesus are upon him. It is *God* that is looking at him: the figures about him fade away. How unimportant they are! He sees no one but Jesus alone: and as the Saviour gazes upon him in his apostasy and wretchedness, there is a physical convulsion in his heart. "Oh, how could I ever have denied Him!" Not a word is spoken: a glance of those eyes is enough. How deep they are and how they burn in their reproach! "If an enemy had done this," they seem to say, "but *thou!*" What shame Our Lord's look brings! But that shame is the saving of Peter. He is come to a sense of his sin; and going out, he flings his mantle over his head, and bursts into bitter and long continued weeping.

Self-examination: This painful scene arouses me. It brings home to me my own life. I have not understood myself at all. And now the eyes of Jesus are resting on

me, and my inner history stands out as if to my very sight. O my Lord, I cannot stand Thy gaze; I sink down into utter remorse and disgust at myself. Who ever denied Thee as I have! When I was young Thou didst put into my heart a special devotion to Thee. Thou didst take me up into intimacy with Thee in my boyhood. Thou didst prefer me before others, and didst promise me Thy priesthood. When I grew older I turned my back on Thee; I denied Thee by my sins. There was no great or violent temptation such as tried St. Peter; I grew cold to Thee by degrees and then I left Thee. I allowed evil tempers and passions to grow strong and bad habits to take hold of me, and I yielded to a miserable attraction. I was wanting in humility; I thought no harm would come to me. I thought it was an easy thing ever to love Thee, and I was not watchful. I became neglectful of prayer, and I fell when the enemy tried me. And this not once, but alas, how often! After confession, after Holy Communion, after sorrow, after good resolutions! Could any

sin be so impious as some sins of mine! I grew desperate and risked my vocation, my hope of Heaven, my share in Thy love. Ah, how I struggled to get free from Thee; but Thou art stronger than I and hast prevailed. I did nothing toward my conversion, I did everything against it and thus I owe all to Thy grace. I have not a word to say, but to bow down in awe before the depths of Thy love.

Petition: Good Jesus, complete Thy work in me. Thou art omnipotent; Thou canst draw good even out of my sins. Let me learn from St. Peter to make Thy great mercy a new title to love Thee. Let it never be long absent from my mind.

St. Peter saw forgiveness in the look of Christ, but he must have it from His lips.

I seem to see, again, the recorded meeting on the lake shore. It is dawn and Jesus is on the shore. Peter wraps his garment about him and leaps from his boat into the sea, and coming to the shore, crawls on his knees to the feet of Jesus. (It is the post-crucem Peter.) Our Lord

does not fling his sin in his face, or turn coldly from him. How tender He is! Peter tries to speak but cannot. Jesus helps him with His threefold confession of love in atonement for his threefold denial. His penance is the care of the whole flock, a magnificent opportunity to work and to suffer for Christ, and a death most like his Master's.

This forgiveness made him a better Apostle. It made him irresistible. A fire of love was ever in his breast for Jesus Christ: it burnt within him and forced its way through his words and conduct into the hearts of men. An hour in bad dispositions, converted by a look, his sorrow lasted all his life, and his life was sacrificed for his Master.

Resolution: My sins have not humbled me, nor Thy mercy won me, dear Saviour: how hard my heart has been! But I will take up my Crucifix, today, and look into those merciful eyes of Thine. They are full of grace. Thine eyes will open mine. Power will come from them to change me once for all; to draw me to Thee with an

awakened, eager mind and with lively devotion. To whom else should I go! Who can save me from myself but Thou! I will not walk my own way without thinking of Thee. I give myself to Thee, this day. I will bring everything before Thee, asking Thy leave for everything I purpose, Thy blessing on everything I do. I will not move without Thee. I will ever lift up my heart to Thee: for I seem to hear Thee saying to me:

Bouquet: "Lovest thou Me, *more* than these?" "For to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much."

THE BETRAYAL BY JUDAS

Adoration: It is the supper-room, and Jesus has gathered about Him His own whom He has chosen out of the world. The door is shut on the world without. This little group is all the following that is left to Him at the end of His ministry. They are enough, however, and with these He will save the world. He clings to them with undying affection, He, "the Faithful and the True", loves them to the end.

But alas! One of them He is about to lose forever; and grief over the loss is breaking His Heart.

See Him at the washing of the feet! Let me adore Him as He kneels before Judas and lays His pure and holy Hands on the feet that will soon be in motion to traffic in His blood. "What I do thou knowest not *now*, but thou shalt know hereafter." By this act of self-abasement He wins grace for Judas to triumph over the proud demon that besets him. He pleads silently

with him, not for His own life, but for the Apostle's poor soul. He kneels to him to win him. He humbles Himself to the very dust to draw from him a single "peccavi".

Considerations: The supper that began in so much joy is ending in deep sadness. Our Lord has a terrible secret to disclose. He returns to it as an oppressive sorrow that weighs Him down. "He was troubled in spirit and He testified and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, one of *you* shall betray Me." He will speak little of His afflictions throughout His Passion; He speaks thrice of this. He will bear in silence the Roman scourge. It can tear the body only; but here is a wound in the Heart. How bitter a stroke it is! In His last trial, one of the twelve apostles, His own familiar friend, betrays Him, and sells Him as a beast in the market for money. The traitor is Judas.

Judas is the foremost figure at the opening of the Passion, how gloomy and mysterious he is! He was chosen an Apostle like the rest. It was a great privilege. Constant intercourse with our Lord should

have made him a great saint, but it turned, instead, to his utter ruin. Closeness to Jesus intensifies every virtue and every vice. He is set for "The resurrection and the fall".

Now Judas had in his heart some element of moral decay. It was covetousness, checked for a while by the first fervor of discipleship, but not striven against nor expelled; and as the novelty of life with Jesus wore off, this passion woke to activity and ended by setting Judas in opposition to his Lord and Master. He lost his love of Jesus, and took up with earthly interests, instead; he changed his purpose of life.

Satan has long had him in his power. As grace after grace is refused, Satan's mastery becomes complete. The unloving apostle cannot now breathe freely in our Lord's presence. It irks him to be near Him. He grows angry with our Lord, he knows not why. But how mad his final sin is! The Apostle or the priest cannot sin with moderation or make a science of it. If he be bad at all, he must be worse than

bad men generally. He can never say what he may not come to through first concessions; his sins are likely to be desperate, and to turn at once into fearful sacrileges. What he does, he does "quickly".

"And after the morsel Satan entered into him." The demon abides in Judas as Christ abides in His faithful Apostles. And his sin is in thought, now fully committed. He is feverish to do harm; our Lord is eager with love to do good. The hour is come: and Jesus turns to the unhappy man, and says, "That which thou dost, do quickly!" And Judas rising goes out. "And it was night." "The time corresponded", says Origen, "with the night which overspread the soul of Judas."

Our Saviour is now in Gethsemane preparing for the end. Judas knows the spot where the Master is wont to pray. Our Lord trusted him, and he uses his position to betray Him. See him approaching under the shadows of the olive trees at the head of the mob—the fallen Apostle taken up by the world for a brief hour. Our Lord rises fresh from His sweat of blood to meet

him. A kiss was the sign—the form of friendship kept when the spirit is gone. “Immediately going up to Him, he saith, Hail, Rabbi and kissed Him.” “O Judas,” our Lord cries in pain when their lips met, “dost thou betray the Son of Man with a *kiss*?” Then fixing His eyes on the unhappy man, He gives him time for deliberation, “Friend”, He says, “wherefore art thou come?” It is another lost grace—the glance that melts Peter, hardens Judas; and he tears himself from his Saviour’s embrace, bearing away on lips or hand a trace of the Precious Blood, the Blood of Christ’s agony for fallen priests. He has resisted our Lord, and his passions are wild. He feels as if our Lord had injured him.

Follow Judas as he strays about the valley of Himmon. It is a restless night of misery for him. The sin is had, and now comes the remorse. Money has lost its charm; who ever gave up so much, and received so poor an exchange! Anger likewise dies down. Jesus, now that all cry against Him, is innocent. He will go back

and declare it publicly (even the lost confess Christ, and the bad priest preaches Him).

Roughly he breaks in upon the chief priests and ancients, pours out the terrible confession, which he must cast forth from his poisoned soul. "I have sinned," he says slowly and solemnly, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood". His eyes glare on them as he publishes aloud his guilt and theirs, in a hopeless, unloving confession. They look upon him with contempt—"what is that to us, look thou to it". With a moan he casts down the price of his sin and goes out.

If he would only go to Jesus, fall down before Him and clasp His feet, He would not turn from him and say, "What is that to Me!" The Saviour would take up this dark sin with the rest of the burden He bore to Calvary and blot it out with His blood. "Him that cometh to Me," He said, "I will in no wise cast out." But Judas flees from Christ and shuns Mary—what wonder, then, if he settles into final despair!

The traitor disguised to himself the heinousness of the sin he was committing. Every truth that had till now been kept out of view is, in this hour, suddenly brought forward by the Evil One, and magnified and colored and distorted before the mind of the duped Apostle. Now the hoarse voice whispers, "Jesus is condemned; He is Christ, the Son of God, and a guilt of more than human blood is on you." "It is done now, and you cannot undo it. You have gone too far to go back. All is lost. You are the Traitor-Apostle, the greatest sinner the world can ever see. There is no forgiveness for you." As he sickened first of his act, then of money; now he sickens of himself. He has had his fill of sin. It has ruined him.

A man must be sorely pressed when he thinks of destroying himself. But such is the end of Judas:—a halter, a dark plunge in some lonely spot—and Judas, the Apostle of Christ is a suicide. Above his grave linger, like an epitaph, the words of Christ, "It were better for him, if that man had not been born".

Self-examination: In the seminaries of today are the bad priests of tomorrow. Thou knowest, dear Jesus, whom Thou hast chosen, and I seem to hear re-echoing in my heart Thy sorrowful voice, "Amen, amen, I say to *you*, one of you shall betray me". "It is *I*, Lord?" Is it possible that my name be one day a shame in this land for some great scandal? Is it possible that I shall tramp the roads an outcast priest, or, more hopeless still, become a sacriligious priest, living with a dried spirit in weary disgust with my priesthood?

Forbid, dear Saviour, that I should ever be so wicked, or so miserably ungrateful! Without Thy grace, however, I shall surely fall away. I cannot doubt this. I do not forget my early life—how I first gave Thee my affections, and then was false to Thee, and was not that treachery? And how shallow my spiritual life is, even now; how unsteadfast I am in my good purposes! I do not half know the evil that is working in me; I dare not look closely into my heart; and I do so little to mortify my evil impulses. Moreover, sin seems so easy to

me and I have, I fear, no horror of it. Where will all this end? Pierce me, dear Lord, with Thy holy fear, or I shall get hardened as time goes on. I get used to devotions and feel less sensible attraction; I get used to the eternal truths, and am less impressed; I get used to my faults and accommodate myself to them; I get a dull feeling of routine about my vocation and any offices towards Thee.

Petition: By the pain Thou didst suffer in seeing Judas fall away, save me, O Lover of Souls, from myself! It is myself I have to fear. There was no fatality about the fall of Judas; it was all his *choice*; the place whither he went was, "his own place". But who can save me from myself but Thou! There comes from Thee a power and virtue, which by its contact is my strength and good. In Thee alone I consist—without Thee I am nothing. Give me up and I have nothing to hope for; keep me and I have nothing to fear. Thou wilt never forsake me. I do earnestly trust so,—never certainly without fearful provocation on my part. Yet I

trust and pray that Thou wilt keep me from that provocation.

Resolutions: With the help of Thy grace, I will “watch and pray”. I will watch over the growth of my passions. In them my danger lies. I will take up with new earnestness the practice of private “particular examination” into my conscience. I will sift my heart, from day to day, to see what aims and motions are stirring there. I must guard against the beginning of passion, and the first treachery of the heart.

Make me live by prayer. I will strive after *inner* unison with Thee. No dress, no vocation, no office, however consecrated, no mere outward contact with Thee, however close it may be, can take the place of inward affections,—of living faith and hope on Thee, and love of Thee. Let me “abide in Thee”. For, without Thee I am nothing.

Bouquet: Each morning I will say, “Dear Jesus, keep Thy Hand on me this day or I shall betray Thee; the wound in

Thy Heart is large, but I should make it larger by my sins”.

THE SILENCE OF OUR LORD IN HIS PASSION

Adoration: Recall in one view the Passion and think how it was borne. From the time of our Lord's arrest to the oncoming of the darkness, when the last revilings had been uttered, there had been an increasing succession of outrages and insults, interspersed with the harrowing sufferings of the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the way of the Cross and the Crucifixion. And how few are the words of our Saviour throughout! How seldom His grave voice is heard amidst the intense activity, outcry and tumult about Him! Then the three long hours of darkness broken only by seven brief sentences! It seems as if the whole work of our redemption was done in the darkness and silence.

I adore my silent Saviour, and I ask the grace to learn from Him as well when He is silent as when He speaks. All may hear the words of Jesus; we cannot choose but fear, for the lips of the dying compel at-

tention. But the silence is little thought of, though the words are but antiphons to introduce us to the long psalms of silence between, to the worship of the Heart Itself. The Blessed Mother of God will help me here; she knew what was passing within that Heart which had not been laid open as yet to the view of men. She needed no words to understand her Divine Son: she ever had an ineffable union with Him in thought and affection.

Considerations: Note the silence of our Blessed Saviour before the tribunals to which He was led. "The High Priest rising up, said unto Him; 'Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee'. But Jesus held His peace". (St. Mat. XXVI, 62, 63). He speaks but little to Pilate, and nothing at all in self-defense. "And when He was accused by the chief priests and ancients, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him. Dost Thou not hear how great testimonies they allege against Thee? And he answered him to never a word: so that the governor wondered exceedingly." (St. Mat. XXVII,

13, 14). To Herod He is sent. "And Herod seeing Jesus was very glad, for he was desirous for a long time to see Him: and he hoped to see some sign wrought by Him. And he questioned Him in many words. But He answered him nothing." (St. Luke XXIII, 8, 9). There is mystery here that compels adoring awe. Men are sometimes dumb through fear for their lives, or they are overawed by the impressive circumstances of the high courts in which they stand, or again their silence is a sullen refusal to speak. Not so with Jesus. His is a holy silence unlike any other. The High Priest is perplexed at it; and Pilate marvels that One who is credited with unheard of powers of speech, and authority over men, should stand silent and defenseless whilst, all around, voices are lifted up against Him in bitter words and demon-like cries of hate. The trial is without precedent. And, withal, He is so calm. There is more than childlike gentleness in His manner, more than angelic sweetness in His countenance, unspeakable mildness in His eyes. His ways are not as man's

ways. I understand the meaning of His silence and of Pilate's awe at Him, for I know, (praised be God!) what the kings and princes of this world could not know; I know *Who* He is. "And the High Priest said to Him: I adjure Thee by the Living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God? Jesus saith to him: "Thou hast said it." (St. Mat. XXVI, 63, 64). He is silent because He is patient; He is patient because He is eternal. ("Patiens quia aeternus."). Christ is *God*. And what I *believe*, these men shall one day surely *see*; as now they judge Him so shall they one day be judged by Him in turn. "Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (St. Mat. XXVI, 64). To Pilate the Jews said, "We have a law; and according to that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore had heard this saying he feared the more. And he entered into the hall again, and he said to Jesus. *Whence are Thou?* But Jesus

gave him no answer.” (St. John XIX, 7-9). Men marveled first at His speech, and now again at His silence. They followed after Him into the desert to hear Him. His words could not return to Him empty, nor pass away as human words do. They could not be without divine power. Think how a word from His blessed lips brought a hush upon the tumultuous sea; how a word put the demons to flight, or rang with the power of resurrection in the ears of the dead; how the brief sentence “I am He” stunned and prostrated the mob that came to seize Him. Now, in His hour of need He is speechless. Once He had answered men when they would dispute with Him, and silenced them so that no man dared to put Him a question again. Why then is He silent now? He is silent because His life is freely *given*, not taken from Him. “Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said to them: whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them, I am He.” (St. John, XVIII, 5). He foresaw and foretold His Passion,

and He would not shun it. He dismisses His legions of reluctant angels, bids the Apostle put up his sword, brings His speech to an end, and gives Himself up to death. "He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth; He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and shall not open His mouth." (Isaias, LIII, 7). He is silent because He stands inwardly before a higher tribunal than that of Pilate, and there is a case against Him *there*. The witnesses are not false. The crimes are real and horrible beyond name, and He takes them upon Himself. His sentence is just, and He has not a word to say. "Pilate therefore saith to Him, Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to release Thee? Jesus answered: Thou shouldst not have power against Me, unless it were given thee from above." (St. John XIX, 11). "Et posuit in eo Dominus iniquitatem omnium nostrum. . . et cum sceleratis reputatus est." (Is., LIII, 6, 12).

Self-examination: O Blessed Saviour of men, Thy silence accuses *me*! Thy silence makes me cry out. Judas who betrayed Thee, Pilate who sentenced Thee, the thief who hung beside Thee, and the Centurion who saw Thee die—all confess Thou hast done no evil. *Thou* art innocent, and no one can convince Thee of Sin. But *I* am the guilty one, and Thou art my Saviour. The anger of God would have fallen upon me but for this atonement of Thine. Hadst Thou cleared Thyself, I should have perished forever. Therefore dost Thou stand, without outcry or protest, clothed in Thy blood at the pillar of flagellation. There is not one blow too many for Thou hast fixed in Thy Heart that by Thy bruises I am healed. Thou knowest what certain sins of mine have deserved; Thou art silent under the lash, guarding my guilty name in Thy Heart. “Dilexit me et tradidit seipsum pro me.” I have fed my pride, and shown myself fairer than I am, I have shut away the truth from the eyes of men and have striven to forget it myself; I have exalted myself, and, therefore dost Thou,

my Saviour, Eternal King, though Thou art, sit blood-stained and dishonored, with faded purple over Thy shoulders, a reed in Hand and a thorny crown on Thy Head, and accept, with a calm heart, and pressed lips, the mockery and derision of the world. Lastly, Thou knowest God's holiness and seest my evil deeds, and uncomplainingly dost Thou stretch forth Thy Hands and Feet to receive the nails. "He was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our sins."

The cruel insults hurled at Thee upon the Cross, the bitter drink put to Thy parched lips, the torturing nails in torn Hands and Feet can introduce no bitterness into Thee against me. Thou dost but speak a word of forgiveness and of prayer, then suffer on in silence.

Resolutions: The silence of our Lord will be a supernatural power to help me against my tongue wherewith I offend God so much. I do not live within the bounds of silence prescribed by the rule. I am troubled with loquacity—it is a sure sign of my pride—I yield to exuberance of con-

versation that dissipates my spiritual strength and relaxes the tension of the will in the service of God. I am too much with men.

My will is braced up by my morning meditation, and I go forth with a firm purpose, but the strength of the purpose is wasted and frittered away by volubility of talk and repartee, giving no room for ejaculatory prayer and inner concentration upon God. I shall strive, by the grace of Christ, to grow in silence; not to be morose or discourteous; but so to govern the springs of my restless heart, (for there is where the trouble rises) that I shall speak far less than I have spoken, because my heart shall be calm and still, not angry or worried, or suspicious, or uncontrolled. If ever I am provoked by ill-treatment, I shall strive to suffocate the smouldering flames in my heart, and keep myself from an outburst of temper. When I am accused of a fault which I have not committed, I ought to bear the accusation as a penance for the many faults which I *have* committed, and of which I have never been

accused. I ought not to excuse or palliate my faults, as often as I have done.

One day, I may be conformed to my Blessed Saviour and be under some grave, false accusation. A priest's name is almost his all—yet not his *all*—his all is to be like Christ. If I could only say in my heart, "God knows how far my reputation is necessary. My case is in His Hands." But alas, that is perhaps more than I shall ever have courage to do! *That*, however, is what the saints have done, for they had so learned Christ.

Bouquet: "Jesus autem tacebat."

THE FIVE WOUNDS

Adoration: The multitude have gone home. Calvary is left to the faithful followers of Jesus. The nails are loosened from the Hands and Feet and the white Body, detached from the rugged wood, is left for a brief time with Our Blessed Lady. He is laid across her lap; He had come forth from her; He returns to her; He is wholly her's. It was she who received his first infant sob and His last awful death cry; whose motherhood began in a stable, and is here perfected at the Cross.

And now she shows me the Blessed Fruit of her womb, Jesus. His lips are mute; He could not reproach me if He would. I gaze upon His Blessed Form. How adorable It is! I cannot keep my eyes from the open Wounds in His Hands and Feet and Side. Mary gives me power to read them. By her ineffable union with Jesus, she has penetrated into them more deeply

than the soldier's spear, or the very nails that made them. These gaping Wounds tell me more than words can tell. I see now what the Passion has been. I shall look upon them and be converted. But first I shall adore them one by one.

“Christum lancea et clavis vulneratum venite adoremus!”

Considerations: Our Saviour came into this world to win our hearts. And this He ever strove to do. In His public appeal He spoke as man never spoke; He wrought mighty miracles; thus He manifested Himself to men, and, for a brief season, drew them after Him by His own attractiveness, so that they forgot at times their famished bodies to be with Him. When the multitude began to fall away from Him because of His “hard sayings”, some pressed Him to manifest Himself to the world in His might. “No one does in secret,” they said, “the works which Thou dost.” They would have Him overawe the world by His miracles. It was not, however, by word or miracle that He would show His supreme loveliness. Before He

would make His last appeal, He finished His sermons and brought His works to an end.

Once, indeed, on a mountain apart from the crowd, He showed Himself to a favored few in His glory: "and His Face did shine as the Sun". But, then, He overwhelmed poor mortal man with the weight of His heavenly brightness, so that the Apostles were drawn out of themselves and "became as dead men".

Here freedom is gone; love is taken, not offered: man no longer acts as man—Peter spoke, "not knowing what he said". The splendid vision is man's reward not His present salvation. No! It was not on Thabor but on Calvary that He should win us to Him. He would make His utmost appeal from the Cross, and rely on the print of His Five Wounds to draw free human hearts to Him. He will speak no more, though His speech is the wisdom and the truth of God; He will let His silent Wounds appeal to us; He will walk no more in search of men, for they will come to Him when His Feet shall have been

fixed to the Cross, suffering love being the magnet. Yes, an uncrucified Saviour had never exercised supreme power to draw the love of man! Love, indeed, begets love; but love radiant with undimmed beauty cannot lay hold of the human heart as *suffering* love can. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself!"

Our Lord uses His pierced members as His best arguments; *they* speak to me when nothing else will. "He showed them His Hands and His Feet." Such stigmata have been borne by the One who loved me and gave Himself up for me; they identify Him. "Handle and see that it is *I Myself*." He presses me as once He did the reluctant Apostle, "See the Wounds of My Flesh! If you still hesitate, *touch Me*!" What diffidence or coldness can withstand this tender appeal? "Come hither and put your finger into the trace of the nails and put your hand into the depth of My Side, and be no longer faithless!" Such is the last appeal of Jesus to man.

What shall *I* do, then, what can I do

but fall down on my knees and gaze reverently upon those Wounds to which He bids me?

Let me now think in the quiet of prayer how first they were made on Calvary.

The two thieves have struggled and cursed, but have been flung upon their crosses: now, the Cross of Christ is laid upon the ground and He is ordered to extend Himself upon It; He yields Himself without any constraint, and places the backs of His Hands close against the rough wood, waiting for the executioners. It is an act of obedience, but done through love. "I lay down My life; no one taketh it from Me."

We nail wood to wood, but to nail living nerves and human members of flesh and blood is fearful to think of. Nevertheless, I strive steadily to hold the mystery before me, and I gaze upon the pure and holy Hands, wasted with fasting, that blessed so many and harmed no one but cured the ills of mankind; I gaze upon the innocent Feet wayworn with journeyings (the place of resort for tormented humanity),

clasped by the distressed, anointed and wept over by the grateful when "He went about doing good." I can endure till I see the large nail held against the Palm and the hammer descending to drive the nail through into the wood beyond; then I close my eyes in pain for a stigma has opened in my heart. I can only adore—knowing *Whose* Hand it is, and why it is adorable.

The Wounds in Hands and Feet are dear, but there is one dearer still; it is the deepest of all—wide as a man's hand, it went straight to the Heart. It was the last outlet of His Blood; it laid the Heart bare. This outward Wound shows as no other the inward love. It proves that He died of a broken heart. It is the reserved symbol of His love. Those who love Jesus Crucified above all things feed their love through *this* Wound.

Self-examination: The sight of the Five Wounds pierces me ere it transforms me. Each Wound has its own meaning hidden in my life. My sins, alas, were the means and instruments whereby Jesus was

wounded! I did not, indeed, handle the hammer and nails, but I did that for which My Saviour felt obliged to lay His Blessed Members against the Cross. He had my name in His Heart and my deeds before His Mind while He patiently hung upon His pierced Hands and Feet. He had set in His Heart that my sins deserved such atonement. He was wounded for my sins. Does this startle me? Let me ponder a moment. My hands, have they been constantly employed in God's service? Have they never been set to sin? My steps have they always been directed to the fulfilment of my duties, or have they never led me from my God? My heart has it remained where I left it the morning of my First Communion? Truly, my sinful deeds were the nails in His Hands and Feet; the spear of the soldier did not sink as deeply in the Side as some horrible thrust of mine at His love.

Let me, then, see the Blessed Mother holding the Body of Jesus in her lap; she is showing me His Hands, and is speaking to *me*. "What has He done that you should

pierce them? For you these Hands knew toil and labor; for you they were the instruments of so many graces. How often were they raised up in prayer! How often have they bestowed blessings upon you! They have so often lifted you up and carried you; this right Hand has so often absolved you. Was it for such acts as these that you have wounded Him? These adorable Hands, in which He took bread and blessed it for you—why have they been pierced?” “O Most Blessed Mother, these Hands were pierced for me! Jesus beheld my evil deeds; then uncomplainingly stretched forth His Hand to receive the nail.”

Next I turn to the Wounds of the Feet, and think that the Blessed Mother is asking why they have been pierced, and is recounting the long journeys of His public life and how He sat wearied by His search for souls. I recall the waywardness of my boyhood, the wilfulness and lawlessness of my youth, and how He still followed me to save me,—“*Quaerens me sedisti lassus.*” These are the Feet that

bore Him to Calvary, that He gave up to be nailed to the Cross to atone for the wanderings of my sinful feet. Was it for all this I pierced them?

And now the Blessed Mother points with silent finger to the Wound in His Side, and shows me how it pierced His Heart. Thought of me, anxiety for me, sorrow for my sins, love for me, made there an actual impression long before I was created. "*Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.*" I go through my life and see how constant and unselfish and sacrificing His love has been, and then I reflect how seldom and how poorly I have made return to Him; how little His pierced Side and broken Heart have meant to me after all. Heart of Jesus! Thou hast loved me; I have not loved Thee.

Resolutions: Hereafter with the help of God's grace I will have frequent recourse to the Five Wounds of My Saviour. I shall find in them all I need. Here is a practice for me to take up. When preparing for Confession, after I have examined my conscience, I often feel at a

loss how to obtain Contrition. Hereafter, I will address myself to the Five Wounds and seek contrition there, and I shall infallibly find it.

Again I will keep by me, wear about my neck and use the Crucifix. I will see My Lord extended upon it, not as represented by sensitive art, but as ploughed with Wounds and coated with Blood. I will learn to look lovingly upon it, to commune familiarly with the Precious Wounds and to cover them with devout and holy kisses as with gems and jewels of love. My heart will teach me what to say.

The Crucifix is good and consoling, night and day; but it is, after all, no more than an image and a memento; it does not give me all I want. I want the very Wounds with Jesus Himself. Where, then, is He that I may come to His Adorable Person? He is no longer on far-off Calvary, where lingers but a memory of Him. Is there, then, nothing left but to wait for Heaven? Alas! I am still farther from Heaven than from Calvary. Can I not come close to the Wounds *now*—here in the very spot where

I am from day to day in need, in pain and in grief? I want the Wounds of Christ with the Precious Blood and the love that is ever fresh within them. Praised be the name of Christ! He has provided for this craving of my heart in the familiar morning Mass. "This is My Body. This is My Blood." "Ye shall show forth the death of the Lord." Here, then, is Jesus Himself; here are the Five Wounds. Other marks of suffering were healed, but these abide. They are on Him now. "He showed them His Hands and His Feet." Though glorified, "He is standing as if slain." He is "still living to make intercession for us." I will unite myself with Him. His perfect oblation will lift up my dull worship. He must prevail when He shows His pierced Hands to the Father. His Wounds cry more loudly for mercy than my crimes for justice. I will resort to them in my need. They are not sources of weakness that sap His life away; they are outlets to His infinite power and grace.

I will enter this morning into those Wounds—the Wounds of His Feet, that

were often wearied and sore in their pursuit of me; the Wounds in the divine Hands, which drew me back as I was plunging headlong into the fires of Hell; even into the Wound in His Side; I shall search therein for the place hollowed out by His care and love for *me*, deep in the sanctuary of His Sacred Heart.

Bouquet: "Put in thy finger hither and see My Hands, and bring hither thy hand and put it into My Side; and be not faithless but believing." (St. John, XX, 27.)

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

Adoration: Let me throw myself in adoration at the foot of the Cross where our Lord hangs on four great wounds and bleeds till His Heart is drained. I cannot be indifferent to *bloodshed*.

Here I see the Son of God bleeding out His human life for me. How can He show Himself more lovable? "See how He loved him", said the Jews when Jesus shed tears for Lazarus; and shall I not say, "See how He loves me", when He shed His life-blood for me? "Redemisti nos, Domine, in sanguine tuo."

O Mother of Sorrows, given from the cross to be my mother, who didst behold the red drops of the Precious Blood falling down to the ground, offer up this Blood for my soul's salvation, together with the tears that furrowed thy cheeks: let it not be shed for me in vain.

“Eia Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac, ut tecum lugeam . . .
Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Fac me cruce inebriari
Et cruore Filii.”

Considerations: 1. In the Passion of Christ the shedding of blood is a foremost feature. Of all the forms of death open to Him He chose a death that involved the outpouring of His Blood. And if He would shed It, He would shed It abundantly. When the long expected hour came for Him to die, the Son of Man solemnly set Himself apart as a Victim in the presence of His twelve Apostles, and went into the Garden and there before three of them He underwent an agony. He rises languidly from the earth and lo, there is blood upon His garments and in His footprints. His forehead is all wet—but it is a sweat of blood. His Passion has begun, and this is the Blood of Atonement. After this, He is seized upon, tried before a judge and is sentenced to be scourged. See Him now

clothed in His own Blood at the pillar of the Pretorium! Then, each member bleeds in turn. The Blessed Head, where all the crowns of the world were due, was torn with torturing thorns. The Hands and Feet were pierced with iron nails, and for three hours those holy Hands that were always filled with mercy gave forth blood when all else had been given, and those blessed Feet that had never wearied in seeking after souls dropped Blood while Jesus lay languishing, pleading, dying on the Cross. When His veins had been drained dry for love of us, He cried, "It is finished," and bowed His Head in death. A little treasure of Blood, driven with the rest towards the four Wounds by the last act of love, slowly found Its way back to the Heart. It rested there as in the cup of the chalice after Communion. It was preserved warm by love, nay, there was life in It, and death could not congeal It. It too must be given up. Then, "one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out Blood and water". The broken Heart contained at last not one

drop of Blood; all had been shed for us.

II. Yes, Jesus is the Saviour through His Blood. Without Him there could be no salvation. The whole is done by Him,—the first grace and the last, entirely His. Our merits are all by His grace. Without Him we could do nothing for all our prayers, and striving and suffering. God has willed our salvation only through Jesus,—“non est in alio aliquo salus”, and He has put it all in His Blood as the instrument.

Virtue went out, indeed, from the hem of His robe, from the touch of His hand, the glance of His Eye, the breath of His Lips, but He has put all His virtue in His Precious Blood. He chose His Blood to be the actual laver of our regeneration, and the actual price paid for our ransom. “We have redemption through His Blood, the remission of sins.” (Col. 1, 14).

Through the *Blood*; not through the Sacred Flesh of Christ, nor precisely by His tears, His sighs, His sufferings. Is, then, the Blood in Itself better, more availing, more precious than any other part or attribute of the Incarnate Son of God?

Assuredly not. Then, why by the *Blood*? Because the blood in man represents his *life*. Everything in man comes from the blood. To shed your blood for a friend is to give your life for your friend. To pour out your blood is to exhaust your last resource. This is precisely what our Lord wished me to understand that He had done, when He poured out His Blood on the Cross. He wished me to understand that He had exhausted upon me the resources of His life and of His love. He could do no more. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the Precious Blood of Christ." (I. Pet. I, 19). Do I realize it? Jesus felt His Life-Blood ebbing from His wounds, and gave it up freely for me. He could do no more. "Greater love no man hath than this that he lay down *his life* for his friend."

III. The efficacy of the Precious Blood comes from Its personal union with Christ. It is *His* Blood. But *Who* was Christ? Our Blessed Lord was in nature perfect man. Though man, He was not such as one of us, and one out of a number. He

was a man because He had our human nature, wholly and perfectly, but His *Person* was not human, like ours but divine. As He had no earthly father, so He had no human personality. When, therefore, He poured out His Precious Blood upon the Cross, it was not *a man's* blood, though it belonged to His manhood. He who bled upon the Cross was the very Same who had been from everlasting. He bled in His new nature which He had made as truly *His own* as His Godhead. His Blood was His very own as truly as His infinite holiness, or His justice, or His mercy. The Blood could, indeed, be separated from the Body, but could not cease to be His own, the Blood of the *Son of God*.

Think how precious it must be. The Blood of Christ is not as the blood of *a martyr*. He indeed shed His Blood to seal what He taught; yet He was not a martyr, but He was much more than a martyr. Had He been a mere man, He would have been rightly called a martyr, but as He was not a mere man, so He was not a mere martyr. Man dies a martyr, but the Son

of God dies as an *Atoning Sacrifice*. He could not bleed for nothing. There was a virtue in His Blood which could be in no other. The Blood shed by the Word Incarnate could not pass away like a dream or be a mere display or figure of something else. It needed nothing else to give It worth; It had virtue in Itself, and Its virtue was *infinite*, for He was God. It was the *Blood of God*. It was charged with the Godhead, as issuing most mysteriously from Him who truly was the Son of God. When He poured out His Precious Blood upon the Cross, the grace, the holiness, the love, the power of God exuded, as it were, and sparkled through every drop of It. What then has resulted from it? "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." The whole world! nothing less. All this comes of His Blood,—our salvation,—our reconciliation to God, the expiation of our sins, and our new creation in holiness.... "It hath well pleased the Father.... through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, *making peace* through *the Blood* of His Cross." (Col. 1, 20).

“We have *redemption* through His *Blood*, the *remission of sins*, according to the riches of His grace.” (Eph. 1, 7.). “Jesus also, that He might *sanctify* the people by His own *Blood*, suffered without the gate.” (Heb. XIII, 12).

Self-examination: I believe that no sin can withstand the Precious Blood of Christ. But why, alas, do I continue to sin? Are the fountains of the Saviour dried? Why have I still to confess the same faults I had to confess a year—three years—ago? *Need* this be? And why am I no better for all my faith and Catholic practices? The reason is I do not make use of the Most Precious Blood with sufficient earnestness. Let me, then, this morning bring myself down to a close view of my soul. In what do I fail most? In what point do I least resemble Jesus? Let me not think now of my neighbor's chief fault; but only of my own. Is it pride, impatience, criticism, grumbling, envy, lack of trust in God, sloth, the wasting of my gifts, self-pity, indulgence in moods or tastes or unmanly softness? Fearlessly,

humbly, contritely let me say it out, by its own ugly name, to self and to God.

Let me take this fault with me to Holy Mass where the Precious Blood may touch it. How often have I carried my sins before the Altar where He is raised up in Holy Mass. His patient eyes have looked down upon my sins and upon me. His holy ears have hearkened to my harsh and evil words; my rough, heedless hands have touched His wounded palms; His tender Heart has perceived the inmost, dark depths of my heart. Dare I continue to do this? Yet I do really come, morning by morning, into His very presence, whether or no I realize it. He does really see me, hear me, understand me—I cannot hide myself from Him. Why then should I not go to Him with faith and contrition and be cured: why not bring my sins into direct contact with the Precious Blood? It is present in Holy Mass. It is offered up for these very faults of mine.

Petition: Dear Jesus, let me seek my place in Thy affections, let me claim my right to be cleansed with Thy Precious

Blood. I have had my place in Thy Heart. Though not yet actually created, there I was clearly within Thy Soul during the whole of Thy Passion, and during the three hours on the Cross. The Blood that bathed and covered Thee, bathed and covered me. It is *my* Blood; Thou hast given It to me. I desire to appropriate It to myself. Shed on Calvary once for all, It is here in Holy Mass for me.

Resolutions: I will, please God, take each day a drop or two of that Blood which trickles from the wounds of the Feet of my Saviour, and in faith, reverently dipping my finger in that Blood, I will apply It to my sore, with the invocation of the sweet name of Jesus. Thus my sin will diminish.

Again, let me see the trace of the Precious Blood in the purple of the priest's stole when I go to Confession. My sins are taken away, not because I come to understand the evil that is in them, not through the moral earnestness of my will, not precisely through my sorrow—though no sin is forgiven without it—my sins are

forgiven through the Blood of Christ alone. "We have redemption through His Blood, the remission of sins." (Col. I, 14). Its touch can make me as if I had never sinned. It can give me back the peace and purity of my childhood. It can utterly destroy my sins. Now, the Blood of Christ is applied to my soul—not indeed by physical contact but in its stupendous effect—by the absolution of the priest. The priest says the words of Absolution, and I *am* absolved on earth and in Heaven. Divine justice is a fearful thing: nevertheless forgiveness is easy. But if my Absolutions cost me little, they cost Jesus much. If I have escaped the just outcome of my own acts, He has not escaped;—the chastisement of my sins was upon Him: He has paid for my ransom with His Blood. My sin has passed from my guilty soul to His pure Soul and has been punished there. Do I realize my debt to the Precious Blood for my frequent absolutions? Saturday evening, week by week, I walk lightly into the chapel and fall upon my knees. My preparation is

soon made: my examination, however careful, cannot be called painful; my prayers for pardon, however real they be, are brief at best; my sorrow, I trust God, may be sufficient but I know it is not distressing. Then I rise and seek Absolution from the priest. I bow my head beneath the words that convey God's forgiveness, and I rise up (please God) forgiven. Here is the scene of *mercy*, so familiar to me. How seldom have I realized the scene of *justice* back of it.

Hereafter, I shall look to the moon-lit garden where, under the olive trees, bathed in Blood, Jesus, my Saviour, is bearing the burden of my sin, and of its punishment. Oh, how different is this from *my* easy act of sorrow, from *my* short prayer of penance! I shall look to the Cross where, with hands upraised and nailed, stretched out in utter desolation, Jesus dropping Blood and forgiveness, has given power to the priest's hand uplifted in absolution to take away my sin and my bitter punishment. I shall, only then, begin

to have devotion to the Most Precious Blood.

Bouquet: "We have redemption through His Blood, the remission of sins." (Col. I, 14).

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

"Father, Forgive them"

Adoration: Our Lord has just been nailed to the Cross, and raised above the heads of all. I fall upon my knees in adoration and strive to look steadfastly upon Him. There He hangs in the world's hard gaze—a spectacle for profane, impure eyes and the mockery of every spirit of evil. He does not shut His eyes, but marks well His lot—an outcast from pity and affection, hanging on the bitter Cross where men would have Him. He is come to save men, and they are putting Him to a cruel death, as an enemy of the race. What a bed of death! He is entering into his last agony, but where is the shaded room, and the tender ministrations of Mary? Mary is here, indeed, whom the Church summons to comfort our death beds, but though every wound seems to cry for her hand, she is powerless to aid—held back by His Will. He gives Him-

self up to men to do with Him what they will.

Christum Regem crucifixum venite adoremus.

Considerations: I. I have been wont to look up at Him there; let me now rather turn and gaze down the slope, and see and hear what He heard and saw from the Cross. What was it He saw? All looks in the swaying crowd converge on Him whom they have pierced, and are blackened with hate; the last sounds borne in upon His hearing are hoarse blasphemies of Him.

The priests begin; the soldiers follow, then the people, and lastly even the crucified thieves join in. The long procession of humanity is now filing past the Cross, so close that all are able to read His title. They are eager to scan His face; they are all saying the same thing, "Come down now from the Cross", I catch the sarcasm in their voices. He said I am the Son of God, but the Law says, accursed of God is he that hangeth on a tree. See! There He is hanging on the tree—"accursed".

Why does not God deliver Him? He made great boasts—to build up the Temple again in three days. He need not go to such rounds, let Him loosen the nails and come down. Where is His great strength now? He saved others, Himself He cannot save. It is easy enough to delude the simple people of Galilee. His miracles are discredited, His life is an ignominious failure.

Oh, Who shall say how the Eternal Son felt as He hung there, beside the highway without the walls; listened to the cries and looked with His dying Eyes into the upturned faces. Are His thoughts drawn to the gaping wounds in His hands and feet? Does He but crave a place to rest His tormented head? How truly He suffers all observe as they pass. The Body writhes in agony; the knees are drawn up, the brow contracts with the intensity of torture; His Blood is on fire with the fresh pain of Crucifixion. Pitied by none. Only words of hatred rising before His cross. "Come down from the Cross." Is His Soul at last embittered by the mockery of His death throes?

Attend! There is a moment's lull in the noises and cries of the crowd. The Head of Jesus which has moved from side to side, is lifted up with painful difficulty; He fixes His eyes on Heaven, His Breast heaves with a mighty paroxysm, the Blood surges from hands and feet, as if a great wound had opened within; the quivering Lips part, and the words come forth with a tenderness that human breast has never felt, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do".

II. The sin of man is great but the love of Christ is greater. He calls no judgment upon men, nor does He threaten. He can only love. He would let their cries of hate rise no higher than His Breast, there to transform them with a cry of pardon. Nothing but sweetness exhales from Him; grace is going out from Him every moment. His effective prayer is incessant. Nay, He does more than plead words, He offers up the Precious Blood while they are shedding it. The sin is horrible, but He will expiate it a thousand times over. He will spare His words; He will suffer

more and more—suffer, for those that are saved and for those that are lost. How is He straightened with desire! He closes His fingers tightly on the nails—mere symbols of his own firm desire—and with a mighty volition gives up His Body to drag on the four wounds. He seeks no relief, but settles down on the rough wood to endure steadfastly till every pang be borne and every drop of blood spent, and the poor Heart breaks in anguished love. He will give His all—not the Hand only, but the Heart, not the Heart's sigh but the Heart's Blood. He refused the drugged cup that He might receive the full Passion into His Bosom. By an act of omnipotence, He gathers the past and the future into the present. He looks with His sacred eyes on the hill to its foot; then, with an inward gaze beyond the river. The horizon widens from His own land into the great world without; time and space vanish; generation after generation comes into view. Nay, all are present to Him for He is the Saviour of all. Calvary is peopled with mankind. The sunlight

dies away from the desolate hill, and a black exhalation of sin rushes in. How unearthly and ghostlike appear the human faces swarming about the cross in the mystic gloom; how hoarse the voices and wild the eyes! *All* are in sin. The sight is sickening to the all-pure Mind of Christ, as each sin is acted out, under the Cross. The air is stifling with pollution. And still the never ending, "Forgive them", arises from the all-noble, all-generous, all-tender Heart of Jesus.

Reflection on Self: And now *I* am straight before Him on Calvary. O my soul, *fancy* Christ before thee and thyself making a mockery of His death! Thou wilt say, "It is impossible, I could not do so". Yes, thou hast done so. When thou didst sin wilfully, then thou hast done so. Thou art one with the men who handled the nails and the hammer, who cried in derision, "Come down now from the Cross". What they did in effect, thou hast done in affection. Turn back, in memory, and recollect the time, the day, the hour, when thou hast done that for which the All-

holy One went into His agony on Calvary. Thou hast seen the Crucifix from childhood; thou hast known what the bitter Passion of Christ was for. Thou hast "crucified again the Son of man to *thyself* and hast made a mockery of Him".

Petition: O injured Lord what can I say? I cannot look on Thee; I throw my arms round my face; I shrink from Thee; I crouch to the earth. It is terrible to turn to Thee. But Oh, turn Thou to me, and so shall I be turned. It is purgatory to endure the sight of Thee, the sight of myself—I most vile, Thou most holy. Yet make me look once more on Thee whom I have so incomprehensibly affronted, for Thy countenance is my only life; my only hope and health lies in looking on Thee whom I have pierced. So I put myself before Thee; I look on Thee again and lo, how Thy Eyes pierce me! All my hidden past rushes with my blood into my very face, and shows naked and open before Thee. I am altogether too loathsome and Thou art looking on me in love. Thou art holding an inward colloquy with the

Father, as if my single soul were Thy exclusive care. Thou art offering Thy torment of Soul, pain of Body, the drops of the Precious Blood for each sin of mine, and art ever saying, "Father, forgive *him* for he knew not what he did".

Resolution: Give me, Dear Saviour, grace to live this day in the thought of Thy forgiveness. Let me begin with Holy Mass. I will no longer kneel by hard and cold, and hear the words and see the Elevation, and but half believe. Whatever be altered between Calvary and the morning Mass, Thyself are not altered,—“Yesterday, today and the same forever”, Thy thoughts are still the thoughts of Calvary. When Thou art again lifted up before me, I shall throw myself beneath the outstretched arms dripping mercy and receive into my breast the pardoning cry, fresh from Thy lips, “Father, forgive them”.

Nor shall I stir till I shall have learned the full Gospel of Mercy. Virtue comes out of Thy loving Heart to my selfish heart and I grow merciful in turn. I will learn gentle tones and words of forgiveness

from Thee. The words are hard to say, but I will say them after Thee. A harsh word, a sharp look unmans me; an affront, a wrong done me, sets my blood on fire. But I cannot afford to be hard. I must not have Thee inexorable; I must lighten my death agony.

I will not examine the sore spots of my heart; I will not reason; I will not heed the smarting of my wounds; I will look upon Thee whom I have pierced. Thy glance of pity will extinguish the disturbance in my breast, precious Balsam will drop from Thy wounds to allay the fever in my blood, and I will say,

Bouquet: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

THE GOOD THIEF

Adoration: The Cross of Christ stands erect on Calvary. Jesus is "lifted up" from the earth. His good time is come. His promises begin to have their fulfilment. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all things to Myself." He is dying for sinners: unearthly virtue issues forth for their conversion with the Precious Blood. He makes a last appeal. He will soften them by His sufferings and win them by His love. His Blessed Mother, too, will plead her seven-fold sorrow for them. And lo, here on Calvary is a first triumph of the Cross! Besides Our Lord, on a like cross, a poor wretch is hanging by a few nails over the pit; the demons are at the foot of the cross ready to seize him; a lifetime of sin is smothering him. But the Son of God reveals Himself to him, creates in him faith and contrition; teaches him to pray one short prayer, and wins him forever. "We adore

Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee, because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

Consideration: In the first moments of mad pain all the bitterness in the criminal was stirred into violence against God and man; in a fit of wild despair he joined with his fellow in cursing Jesus. But as he hung there, a change came over him. What the law with all its penalties could not accomplish, Our Lord wrought (praised be His name!), who neither threatened nor reproached, who only prayed and suffered. He was stronger than all the officers of justice, for they could only pierce the malefactor's body, but He pierced his soul. Our Lord said, "Father! Forgive them", and here is a miraculous answer at His side. See the effect of prayer!

In that fellow Sufferer, tortured almost out of the likeness of man, one thief discerns a majesty that neither pain nor indignity can disturb. He marked the willingness with which Jesus laid Himself on the Cross, lovingly placing His hands on

the rough beam when the huge nails were ready. Now he sees Him looking down with gentleness on the rabble that are feasting their eyes on His agony. Jesus is a perplexity to him and he watches Him closely. The sinner is meditating, as I now am, on the Passion. He knows that the rejected Jesus is before him; he hears the jeers of the crowd; he marks the thorn crown around the Sacred Head; this title stands out boldly, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews". He looks, he ponders.

From the parched lips he hears no word of indignation or complaint; but broken by the sobs of the death struggle: "Father, forgive them". He is softened by the sight of such patient goodness. Grace comes and is not rejected. God's immediate presence is here. He begins to feel awe at the power and majesty of Jesus, greater than if a miracle were wrought. A revelation of unearthly beauty, of a royalty not of the world breaks in upon his soul as he watches the Countenance of Christ. It is all done quickly. How it is done man cannot say. It is God's work,

and therefore wonderful in our eyes. *Faith* shows the malefactor in this Outcast, the supreme King whose kingdom is not of this world, the Lord of Heaven and earth, the Master of Death. The poor criminal separates himself at once from the scoffers and rebukes his fellow robber for his unbelief. Then, springing from faith comes *fear* of God. "And dost thou not fear God, seeing that thou are under the same condemnation?"

He examines his life and judges his sins,—he is before the judgment seat of Christ. All his life turns black in the presence of God's purity. He makes his *confession* and accepts his awful penance. "And we, indeed, are condemned justly; for we receive the just reward of our deeds." (One true Easter Confession!) Then he voices *compassion* for his innocent Saviour: "But this man hath done no evil".

Our Lord has not spoken, but His eyes have turned this way more than once, and whilst that look rested on him, all pain was forgotten. The penitent's soul is drawn after Jesus. His one hope is in

Him. A passionate desire wakes within his bosom to cast himself on the mercy of Him who hangs beside him.

It is the decisive moment. Mary moves close to him. He is not motherless in his abject need. Grace is just in time. He gives one glance at those merciful eyes of hers, and lo, a cry goes forth: "Lord remember *me* when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom," he prays! One brief prayer of love at the end of a sinful life! And see! Our Lord is strangely stirred. The thorn-crowned Head that lay drooping on the Breast is lifted. It turns to him. The eyes, dimmed with blood, painfully raise themselves to his, and give one piercing look. The precious drops are pouring anew from the hand outstretched in absolution. The dry lips open and words come thick and slow: "Amen, I say, to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise".

A memento was all the poor sinner asked. The answer was a pardon for the sins of a life, final perseverance, canonization while living, the promise of Heaven

and—happiest of all, reunion with his Master before the Sun had set. This day, this Good Friday, before nightfall: and in Paradise with his Saviour! “Hodie; mecum!”

Reflection: This signal mercy is Gospel enough for me. Dear Jesus, whilst Thou art radiant with this supreme love, and these words of absolution linger like a benediction on the air, I wish to bring *my life* to Thee. I have need of some such mercy. Here is my opportunity. It is a time of copious grace. I desire to go to confession next to this man, who came here a few hours ago a sinner and is now a saint. Hitherto, I have but used words of contrition and have not been converted. I wish, now, to catch from him something of his faith and fear and compassion and love.

Whether my sins are greater or less than his Thou alone dost know. I see, however, in my life a malice that the rough and the ignorant cannot have. This only I know. I have no other ground of hope than Thee. “Qui Mariam absolvisti

et latronem exaudisti, *mihi* quoque spem dedisti."

I know Thou art ready to take me at any time. Forgive me all there is to forgive. Thou knowest, my God, what that means. Could I ask any other than Thee? The poor outlaw relying on Thee, confessed Thee, while Peter relying on self denied Thee.

Petition: Dear Jesus, save me from myself; keep me from the only unpardonable sin—unwillingness to be pardoned. Here on Calvary is an awful instance of what I may come to. Here where the shadow is darkest hangs on his cross the bad thief. The living Crucifix is held up before him as before his brother in crime, and he turns his face away. I cannot bear to think of the pang in Thy Heart, dear Saviour, that a soul should be lost on Calvary itself, Good Friday, while Thy Precious Blood was falling in waste on the very rocks, and Thy Blessed Mother was standing by in agonized prayer. Here is my danger—to see Thee, as it were with my eyes, to hear Thee with my ears, to touch

Thee with my hands, in Thy holiest mysteries, and yet to be as unchanged as if I saw Thee not, heard Thee not, touched Thee not; to see and not to understand, to hear and not to ponder, to touch Thee mechanically but not vitally. "The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the spirit that giveth life."

Resolution: In a few minutes Holy Mass will begin. Time and distance will vanish and I shall be on Calvary. Give me, dear Saviour, the grace to watch by the Cross, to discern Thee, to enter into Thy Blessed Sacrifice as the good thief did. Give me intense faith to begin with; from faith lead me on to fear; to review the sinful past in sorrow of heart; to look with compassion at Thee; and to send up to Thee, into Thy loving Heart, the one earnest cry, "Lord, remember me!"

"When to the Cross the sacred limbs were nailed,
Only the God was veiled;
But on the Altar here the Manhood too
Lies hidden from our view.
Both I believe, though neither can I see,
And with the dying thief I cry,
'Remember me!'"

I will hear Mass well, and then please God, I will bear the *daily obedience*, that Our Lord was pleased to call the daily cross, in union with Him and in a spirit of penance. "Hodie; mecum!" The good thief will teach me how. Jesus has admitted him into His Passion. Their crosses are lifted side by side and the poor wretch who first struggled and wailed like a beast, comes to suffer with Christ. There is the peace of absolution in his heart—the hard lines are gone from his face forever and the look of childhood returns. Ah, how lightly he hangs on the cross now; how he studies Christ crucified! His thoughts are drawn from self; his heart is wrenched from his body and is beating in the Breast of Jesus. With what awe, yet with what hope he hears the death cry and sees the Sacred Head of Our Lord sink forward on His Breast. And so the penitent hangs on the lesser cross till the soldiers come and put an end to his sufferings. Men fling the stiffened and distorted body into the potter's field: Jesus

folds the pure soul to His Bosom with infinite tenderness.

Bouquet: "Hodie; mecum!"

THE SACRED THIRST

Adoration: Adore Jesus languishing on the cross; hear His heart-stirring voice, "I thirst." The ministry that opened in the desert with hunger ends on the cross with thirst. He who has been so long silent cries out in pain at last, His torment is the thirst of utter exhaustion.

"Quaerens me sedisti lassus."

If the recollection of this mystery moves me now, what woe must have fallen on that cloaked and stricken figure at the foot of the Cross of Christ on Calvary. Mary then looked on His dying Face with a face on which death was almost as deeply imprinted. She sees His parched, quivering Lips, white with the whiteness of the last mortal struggle, she hears the Voice, faint and pathetic, and she is powerless to aid Him. He has taken Himself out of her care, and given Himself up to sinful man. He suffers because He wills it. He suffers in throat or tongue for the sins of intem-

perance, evil speech and uncharitable talk; He suffers heart-thirst for the love of men. My soul is the strong desire of His Passion; its salvation, the fruit of His mortal pain.

Considerations: I. I think it a hardship to be thirsty on a hot day. Perhaps I have seen some one in fever, and have marked how the trembling hand seized the cup of water. The thirst of Christ is something apart. He had nothing to drink since the Last Supper. He has been scourged into a feverish sickness of Body, and now He is on the Cross. His hurts are inflamed by exposure, His Veins are drained by four distended wounds, the life-springs in the Heart are failing, the marrow of His Bones is dry, a fierce fire rages in His Breast, parches His Throat, dries and cracks His Lips, His Tongue is swollen. St. John lays stress on this torment as a fulfilling of the Scriptures.

Jesus is suffering throughout, but all His sufferings seemed merged into one—a hoarse cry rises from the depths of His

Being. "I thirst!" He is come to the last depths of earthly want and affliction.

The shipwrecked sailor on the sea, the wounded soldier on the battlefield asks for nothing but a little water. How the sufferer's eyes stare wildly, and the ashen face lights up when the cup at last touches his lips! A cup of cold water is the commonest service of life. Jesus makes a kind of sacramental of it when it is given in His name. Alas, that He should have lacked it in His own agony! One of the soldiers who keep watch makes a move to give Him a drink. "Wait," they said, "and see if Elias will come and help Him."

From a vessel containing a mixture of sour wine and water, the drink of the Roman soldiers, he fills a sponge, and fastening it to a reed, reaches it to His parched lips. A miserable drink in a revolting receptacle is our Lord's last refreshment upon earth. It is proffered by the hand of a stranger and a heathen. Ages before, the Prophet bemoans the pity of this pain. "In My thirst, they gave Me vinegar to drink".

II. Our Lord thirsts indeed, but there is in His cry a deeper than physical pain; holy men feel it, but I am too coarse to understand. I am not contemplating a human sufferer. I must rise from the sensible to the spiritual. There is a soul-thirst more imperious than any craving of the body. A cup of water could not have given Jesus all the relief He craved. The dryness is not merely on His Lips, it is in His Heart. "Give me immortal souls!" is what He means. Why is He on the Cross at all, if not from a heart-craving for love? "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all to Myself." He hardly speaks in His ministry of bodily hunger or thirst without in a moment passing on to the deeper needs of the soul—the thirst for the Living Water, the hunger for the Bread which came down from Heaven.

Thus, our Lord slighted hunger and thirst when souls were to be had. Tired from a long journey, He really thirsted at the well of Sichar. He had asked for a drink, but forgot the cool water below, because straightway there was a poor sin-

ner at hand whose love He would win. He at once began to speak to the woman of a better drink than the water there,—“the drink indeed” which quenches thirst forever. Speaking of eternal love, He forgets the things of earth, and when His disciples return with food, He refuses to touch it. His Face is suffused with a beatific joy. He talks a language of the soul that they do not comprehend. He has already been refreshed. “I have meat to eat that you know not.” He had saved one soul. His love had been satisfied, His thirst quenched.

Jesus, then, thirsts for more souls. It startles me how all devouring His love is, it is like a flame in His veins. He who gives His own Blood to quench the thirst of men, is Himself left with a fever in His Heart. His poor Heart is baffled and tormented with the scanty draft of man’s love. See! Even now, while He is dying of thirst, the impenitent thief will not give Him even his polluted soul. His thirst was not assuaged on Calvary—then it was never quenched. So it was going to be

evermore. So much innocence, so much of the heart's best love lost forever to Jesus, and swept away with the very refuse of the streets!

Self-examination: And now my heart sickens. Jesus has been all the while looking to *me*. "I thirst! Give Me to drink". Dear Jesus, how much of my soul have I not kept back which would have somewhat cheered Thee on the Cross. I cannot deceive Thee with fair words. Thou knowest what my life has been. Thine Eyes are on my heart. How little have I cared for Thee, after all! Was it worth Thy while to empty Thy Veins of the Precious Blood for the poor dregs of love I have given Thee? Nay! Have I not repaid Thy love with vinegar and gall? Dear Saviour, what reparation can I make? One heart is too little to love Thee with.

Petition: Would that I could have lifted up to Thy Cross every soul for which Thou hast died, and have quenched Thy burning thirst with its love and contrition! Would that I could bring here the souls of all poor sinners—those who are near and dear to

me; those who have none to pray for them; those who are hardened in sin; those who are to die today. There is one draught at hand I can bring Thee, *now my own* love of which Thou hast tasted so little. Let me lift this invisible refreshment to Thy dry Lips. I must not merely feel or use words, I must choose, I must act today.

Resolution: I cannot look on coldly where a pagan was moved. I do not keep Lent. Though I claim to be Thine, there is little mark in my daily life of Thy Sacred Stigmata. Thou hast endured thirst, Dear Saviour, to give me a distaste for the indulgence of the appetite. Thrice today, as I stand in the refectory, I will fix my gaze intently on the crucifix and tax my attention to catch Thy faint voice of appeal; then, unnoticed by all save Thee, I will, with Thy help, deny my taste in some way, however slight.

Some day, I hope to do more. I will bring Thee *souls*.

I know that somewhere souls are waiting for me. Children who will tell out their hearts to me in first Confession are

now in their mother's arms ; I may already have looked into faces which will be lifted up to me for First Communion ; young men are today trifling with first temptations of curiosity, who will one day come in fearful habits of sin and fling themselves, half in hope, half in despair, at my feet in Confession ; I may have passed in the street men now in health who will soon hold out a hand to me from their death bed. I want to save every one of them. Now I can only *prepare*. "I sanctify myself that they may be holy." I shall pray and labor today in the thought that I may one day deserve to hear from Thy lips ;

Bouquet: "I was thirsty, and *you* gave Me to drink."

WORDS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Adoration: There on the bare hill, in the inner circle cleared by the soldiers, close to the Cross, stands the broken-hearted Mother of God, wrapt in her unspeakable thoughts. Beside her is the virgin Apostle, St. John, grown old with the woe of a few hours.

Mary stands before Jesus for three hours and these the last of His life; He speaks to her one brief sentence and She guards unbroken silence throughout. It is the supreme hour when silence is the fit speech. Jesus and Mary are united in thought and in heart in one immolation. "Piis, O Virgo, spectas Eum oculis, contemplans in Eo non tam vulnerum livorem quam mundi salutem."

Mary has prayed for the enemies of Our Lord and has interceded for the thief. Death is coming very near. His eyes are now on Mary and now on St. John. He is going to speak. It will be a parting word.

Dear Jesus: Admit me into this privileged intimacy. I will go on my knees to receive these words of Thine into my heart. I know there will be comfort in them for me. I will treasure them up while life lasts. Dear Mother of God, draw me close to you; keep me for a few minutes this morning, in spirit, on the desolate spot where you spent long hours in awful reality, the first Good Friday; "juxta tecum pie flere". Teach me the meaning of all that I see and hear.

Considerations: I. Jesus turns on Mary one look of fondness only to give her up—"Woman! Behold thy son', not *Me* but thy new son." He speaks as if He had already put off the filial character.

At the outset of His public ministry, He had left Mary, as the priest leaves home to minister to souls. Once she had desired to speak to Him but she "could not come at Him for the crowd". Now He is on the Cross. The circle of Apostles which he had formed with so great care, is broken. The good flee, forsake, deny Him or follow afar. Now is Mary's hour;

she may come to Him now. It was by no accident, however, that she was on Calvary. Her place was there, as fitly beside the Cross as it had been beside the crib. She must complete her part and "become the mother of all the living". She drew John after her to represent us all beneath the Cross. "When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing, whom He loved, He saith to His mother, 'Woman behold Thy Son.'" Mary is thus installed in her office of second Eve, the mother of mankind. It is a new motherhood—here is a second annunciation Nazareth is set over against Calvary. The midnight hour, the silent room, the ecstatic prayer, the lowly promptitude of the consent, the swift marvel of the adorable mystery;—all these are now exchanged for the top of Calvary in the dim light of the eclipse with her Son hanging bleeding on the Cross. Oh, what surpassing joy went with that first motherhood, what intolerable anguish with the second! Yet while God sent His angel to make the first annunciation, He, Himself, condescends

to make the second. Joy has changed to anguish—all is changed except the one will of God and Mary's fidelity. He bids Mary be a mother to us as she was to Him, to take us as her children. By her charity she is ready for this second motherhood as she was by her purity for the first. The "Fiat Mihi" is in her heart, her eyes are on the Eyes of Jesus, she need not speak, nay, she cannot with a sword in her heart; she reaches out her hand from beneath the blue mantle and draws John to her side, and in him takes us all to her heart.

II. Jesus, resting His Eyes on John, forgets the throbbing, thorn-crowned Head, the great wounds, the lacerated Body, the agonising Soul, to think of us, to provide for us. After that He saith to the disciple: "Behold thy Mother!" The Blessed Virgin is not the patron saint of any one; she is the Mother of us all. We do not choose her, she has been given to us. Our relation to her is necessary, not voluntary. We cannot have Our Lord for our brother without having her for our

mother. We can hardly be said to learn devotion to her at all; it is, as it were, in the heart from baptism, to love her and seek her face, to have her blessing, catch at her robe and be sensitive of her honor.

She was given to us when Jesus, forgetful of His pain, though He hung from four great wounds which it would be agony to touch ever so gently, looked with pity on forlorn humanity, transferred all his rights to us and said in a tone of infinite compassion, "Behold thy Mother!"

I give her up to you,—next to my Precious Blood, My dearest legacy. John gently puts his hand into Mary's. Thenceforth she is ours; we will take her home to our hearts.

Self-examination: Dear Mother of God, now my Mother, I begin at last to understand what Jesus would have us to be to one another.

I have never denied you—God forbid! I am a Catholic; nay, like St. John, I am favored beyond others, I am to be a priest. Nevertheless I have been heedless of the treasure I have had in your motherhood;

thoughtless of the sacrifice you have made for me, enduring, in a manner, to take me instead of Jesus. I have forgotten the pains of the Mother that bore me. Where, alas, is the devotion of my boyhood? Why should coldness come over me as I grow old? How many Lents have I passed without special devotion to you, or distinct thought of your Presence on Calvary? Is there any trace of you in my features? Anything to show for all the trouble you have taken with me, for all the affection you have wasted on me?

Petition: Dear Mother, you have been most faithful to the last will of Christ—to the charge given you on Calvary. The burden has fallen to you, the privilege to me. I have not had to grope in the dark for a hand to guide me. I have ever felt your presence around me; it has shed the joy of Heaven about my life in my best moments, and kept me from despair in my worst.

I know you will not fail me now or at the hour of my death. But pray to Jesus that I may be devoted to you; that I may

have greater faith in His dying blessing, breathed over me in the person of St. John; that in dark moments of guilt or depression, I may throw myself at the foot of the Crucifix and arise only when I shall have heard Him say, "Behold thy Mother!" You cannot forget what it cost you, to be my mother. Make me tender-hearted toward your sorrows and so draw me, as life goes on, as you drew St. John—in some gentle way as befits my weakness—to the love of Christ crucified. Stand by me, most of all, in my last agony—to ease my anguish, to beat off the sombre phantoms of evil and to keep my mind in union with Jesus on the Cross. Breathe then into my ear the precious sentences you have treasured up from Calvary, "Father, forgive them." "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

Resolution: In a moment I shall leave this prayer-hall for the chapel; then when the priest mounts the altar I shall be on Calvary, no longer is mere thought as now, but as truly as Mary once was, when the sacrifice was offered without vestment or

mystic veil, or human minister. I will strive to hear Mass in union with her. She did not withdraw to a dim distance, nor cover her face with her hands. She "stood", through the air darkened with mystery and the rocks quaked under her feet, close to the Cross, still, collected and motionless; she did not avert her face, though she could have cried out in agony as every wound struck at Him passed at once to her, but she made no outcry, she only suffered; she looked intently on Jesus, gazed up into His face and with her unutterable thoughts entered into the inner mysteries that in turn contracted and dilated the Sacred Heart. Her suffering was a great "compassio"; she was crucified in soul with Christ.

When I shall have heard Mass I shall go down from the Mount to the duties of the day in the union with Mary. I will take her "to my own". She is more to me than Angel or Saint; she is God's Mother; she is my Mother. I will speak to her as if she were present to my sight. I will set her picture before me and from

time to time glance at her and say, "Behold thy Son!"

I shall never tire saying:

Bouquet:

"Monstra te esse matrem,
Sumat per te preces,
Qui pro nobis natus
Tilit esse tuus."

THE ABANDONMENT

Adoration: The darkness of Calvary is like midnight. The murky atmosphere of sin and sorrow has closed in on Jesus, faint, parched, prostrate on the Cross. There is a movement as of the powers of darkness rushing round the Cross, with the gloom of their lost spirits. Human voices are awed into stillness. Now is the ninth hour, the darkest of the Passion. It is the hour of sinners and of the spirits of darkness. Suddenly a great cry goes out from the hill-top, revealing the mystery of this hour of anguish. It is the moment of the consummation—"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" I fall upon my knees, my strength fails me. Dear Jesus, I cannot pass over, this Lent, Thy chiefest pang. But bear with my weakness: for how shall I come near, when Thy Apostles have fled away? How shall I fix my thoughts on a mystery above sense and thought. A dizziness seizes my

head, a nameless fear chills me through and through, and I sink into numbness. The mystery is too awful. I can only worship Thee, knowing not what I say. Mary alone, with a strength above angel and saint can approach Thy Cross now, stand on her feet the whole weary while, leaning on no one; gaze upon Thee; and drink in Thy supreme woe with her eyes and ears.

Vidit suum dulcem natum,
Moriendo desolatum
Dum emisit spiritum.

Considerations: The pain is not now in pierced Hand or Foot, or raw Back, parched Tongue or torn Temples, no eyes can see it, for it is in the Soul. His Soul is more crucified than His Body. Few there are, alas! who pity His inward desolation though it broke His Heart. He is now enduring universal abandonment. It pierced Him with grief when His own people rejected Him. I see Him standing at the last on the hill-top overlooking Jerusalem; tears are coursing down His Cheeks; He thinks of why He came on earth; of what

He has done, and He reaches out His arms toward the hardened nation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would *I*—and Thou wouldst not".

Next His disciples leave Him. He had chosen them out from the rest. He made them His confidants. He rejoiced in their sympathy when His solemn trial was approaching. He assembled them about Him at the Last Supper, as if they were to support Him in His Passion. But it was His adorable Will that He should be again wounded in His affections. They left Him to Himself. One betrayed, another denied Him, the rest ran away from Him, and left Him in the hands of His enemies, and the Cross received Him. He who comforted others is Himself un comforted, "Ye shall leave me *alone*", he had predicted, "and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me".

He had in the course of His ministry fled from man to God. He trusted Himself not to man, for He knew what was in man. He had stayed His Soul on God alone. Thus, He goes down with the line of sin-

ners to the Jordan to submit to the baptism of John, and lo, the Heavens open above Him, and reveal the mystery of His inner life. In the sombre wilderness the demon from the pit tempts Him, He turns at once to God and angels come and minister to His suffering Humanity. He is saddened in His ministry with the daily pressure of the sin-stricken world upon Him, but at night He is where there is no tumult, or distress, or sin,—alone with God, in utter, profound, ineffable union. He said, “He that sent Me is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone; for I do always the things that please Him”. Nay, He lived always in the very vision of God, for *He* was God. And when His Passion drew near, He took three of His Apostles with Him upon the mountain top, and there was transfigured before them, and, as earth paled and dwindled away, His Apostles caught a glimpse of the Heaven in which the Son of Man was. But now He deprives Himself of this elementary consolation by which He lived. He said when His Passion began, “My soul is sorrowful even

unto death", and now at the last, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" He had given up His Blessed Mother at Nazareth to live in a fallen world, and now He suffered the sensible Presence of God to be so far withdrawn that His Godhead does not alleviate one single pain, or console one single mental agony. His sorrows are comfortless. It is the dark transfiguration of bitter woe. The brightness of Tabor is turned into the blackness of Calvary. On the glorious mountain the joy of the radiant soul illuminated the immaculate flesh, and made His countenance bright as the sun, and His garments white as the snow. Now His soul is bedarkened with desolation, His haggard Face is clouded over with a great woe, and His pierced Body is robed in His own Blood. No bright cloud overshadows Him—the very Sun is hidden. Earth has given Him over, Heaven is shut, the voice of the Father is not heard. He is lonely and desolate in His need, His affections are left to thirst without the true object of them; He seeks the Father to whom he has been

obedient from His first breath in the manger to His death of the Cross and that Blessed Presence can no longer be felt. He lifts a stricken voice to tell the forlorn desolation of His human Heart; "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" This cry, "de profundis"—the death cry is preserved to this day in the Gospel in the Aramaic that left the lips of Christ.

Reflection: Dear Jesus, the cause is not in Thee. Thy conscience witnesses to Thy sinlessness. Even Thy persecutors, even Thy false Apostle who betrayed Thee, the judge who sentenced Thee, and the soldiers who conducted Thee to execution testify Thy innocence. The very Eye of God can find no blemish in Thee. Thou art the Holy One of God! How white Thy figure shows as they lift Thee up against the dark background of Calvary! But I look again, and Oh, the change! I peer through the mist and darkness, and Oh, the horror! Thou art bearing my sins in Thy body on the Tree. And is not that guilt? In Thee as a mirror I behold the loathsome self whose view has sickened me whenever I

have looked closely into my life. Dear Jesus, has it come to this, that my evil life should fill Thy Conscience and find its way into every sense and pore of Thy Mind. Oh the distraction when Thou didst find Thy Eyes, and Hands, and Feet, and Lips, and Heart, as if my polluted members and not the Members of God! Are these the Hands of the immaculate Lamb of God, once innocent, but now red with all my deeds of shame? Are these Thy Lips not uttering praise and holy blessings, but defiled with all my evil speeches? Or Thy Eyes profaned as they are by all the evil visions for which I have abandoned Thee? And Thy Heart frozen with my hardness and unbelief; and Thy Memory laden with every sin which I have committed since first I could sin at all?

My Lord and my Saviour, it is unbearable to hear Thy cry of anguish, but if Thou shouldst speak one word, and clear Thyself what should I do then? But no, not one word against me is wrung from Thee in all Thy long agony; the cause of all Thy woe is kept back in Thy Heart; the in-

nocent suffers for the guilty. To save me Thou hast put off the defenses of Thy Divinity, opened Thy Arms, and bared Thy Heart, sinless as it is, to the full punishment of my sins. I have deserved to be cast away forever into utter darkness, and here dost Thou hang in my stead with pierced Hands and Feet, motionless under divine abandonment. Thou hast given Thy Soul in expiation of my sins. It is this that makes Thy death so hard and penal and bitter.

Resolution: Here then on Calvary I understand at last how horrible a thing sin is. My dear Lord and Saviour, how can I make light of that which has had such consequences. Sin, my sin has left the Son of God desolate on the accursed Tree. I have crucified Thee O my Saviour, what a dreadful thought—but I cannot undo it; all that I can do is to hate that which made Thee suffer. Shall I not do that at least? Shall I not love my Lord just so much as to hate that which is so great an enemy of His, and to break off all terms with it? Shall I not put off sin altogether? By

Thy great love of me, enable me to do this,
O Lord.

And so I betake myself to the Cross whereon God is dying in torment to save me from Hell; and I marvel and wonder why it is He has singled me out for so much mercy and patience and forgiveness. I think what He might have done to me a thousand times over, in all justice, leaving me to the natural consequences of my madness and folly; and I look up to His bleeding brow and wounded hands and hear His cry of agony, and I see what He has done instead.

Bouquet: "Oh wonderful condescension of Thy pity in our regard! Oh unspeakable tenderness of charity; to ransom Thy slave Thou didst deliver up Thy Son".

IT IS FINISHED

Adoration: Let me kneel in adoration at the foot of the Cross, close to Mary. I have need of her help for my weakness. She will support me in that faith of her's which no trial could stagger; in the hope that clung closer to Jesus for every hurt and ignominy; in the love that was absolutely self-forgetting.

Three hours, has the atoning Crucifixion gone on in silence, with a word said aloud now and again to mark the chief stages of the sacrifice, as is the way in the Holy Mass. And now the end is very near. And lo! The Sacred Head is raised from the blood-stained Breast, the eyes take in the earth in one piercing, thrilling, glance and are lifted up to Heaven. The look of agony passes from the bloodless countenance, and there is an affirmation of triumph in His voice. "It is finished".

The beauty of God's Son is all marred; He is dying under every appearance of

defeat; but He has given all glory to God, has broken the power of evil forever. His purpose is fulfilled, His work is done. The world is redeemed. "Adoramus Te, Christe, et benedicimus Tibi, quia per Crucem sanctam Tuam, redemisti mundum."

Considerations: The Son of God came to die when He need not have died; He died to satisfy for what might have been pardoned without satisfaction. A single prayer of Jesus, one drop alone of His Blood would be more than enough—yea, a tear would have sufficed to redeem us, but it would not be enough to give vent to the Love of God. There is shown forth in the redemption the same profusion of love that marks God's operations in nature. God cannot do a small work; He cannot act by halves. Because suffering would perfect His work on the human side, He would suffer. If He was to suffer, He gave Himself to suffering: He did not come to suffer as little as He could; He did not turn away His face from suffering; He confronted it—He would not

taste, sip, flavor or disguise with human medicaments the bitter chalice of His Passion, He would drain it to the bottom. He would suffer to the full because suffering gives intensity to the acts of the human heart, and lifts love to a whiter heat of perfection. He would take the throbbing anguish of mind or body and turn it into fuel to feed the flame of the heart. Suffering is the very fuel of that fire—a fire to be fed on the wood of the Cross.

He would suffer in no ordinary way, but unheard of and extreme torments. It was a hard life He chose. Out of the shelters of this world Jesus chose for His birth the stable of Bethlehem, and for the end of life, out of all the possibilities that were before Him, He selected the Cross. He chose that which would bring with it the greatest show of pain and shame. "Having joy set before Him, He chose the Cross." He filled up His life with suffering. He was "Acquainted with grief." "Suffering in the exercise of her divine and austere mission, was waiting for Him when He set His Foot upon the Earth.

“She stood beside the crib at Bethlehem and accompanied Him in the wanderings of His infancy. She dwelt within the walls of the holy house, cherished by Jesus, Mary and Joseph. When He went forth upon His Father’s business, she trod the ways of Judea and Galilee by His side or led Him by the hand to toil, to contempt, to ingratitude, to cold or hunger and watching.

“She caused Him to feel the sorrows of His mother. She let Him taste the bitterness of being disowned by the high or by the lowly, rejected by His people. She wrung from Him in the garden that cry of anguish prophesied long before, ‘Save me, O God, for the waters have broken in even upon my soul’.

“She beckoned Him to the pretorium and to the mockery and horror of the crowning with thorns. She laid the Cross upon His bleeding Shoulders and went before Him on the road to Calvary. Then she stood still on the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense, where bitterness was to be supreme and sacrifice was to

go up to the heavens. She stood still and pointed to the Cross and the nails; and He said, 'Behold, I come!' And when the Cross had been lifted up, suffering for yet three hours, lingered in the silence of the darkness; for yet three hours—and then her mission was at an end." "It is finished".

The will of the Father is accomplished. Not one jot or tittle has been passed over. He is "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross". Every prophecy is fulfilled—He is reputed with the wicked, His hands are pierced, His bones numbered, His garments divided, He is abandoned by His friends; He has but to taste the bitter drink and die. He has drawn back from no labor or humiliation, He has declined no sacrifice; He can add nothing to it. His work is complete. "Greater love than this no man hath." The price He paid is nothing short of the whole treasure of His blood, poured forth to the last drop from His Veins and Sacred Heart. He sheds His whole life for us; He leaves Himself empty of His all. He

left His throne on high, He gave up His home on earth, He parted with His Mother, He gave His strength in His toil. He gave His Body and Soul.

He offers up His passion, His crucifixion and His death, that redemption might be plenteous, that He might show forth adequately the love of God. "God so loved the world." I try now to think—the thrilling thought—it was "the Son of God, Who loved me, and delivered Himself for me". (Gal. II, 20.) It is this very thought that gives meaning to all I see and hear on Calvary.

What is to me a *man*, and nothing more, in agony or scourged or crucified? There are many holy martyrs and their torments were terrible. But here I see One dropping blood, gashed by the thong, and stretched upon the Cross, and He is God. It is no tale of human woe which I am reading here; it is a record of the passion of the Great Creator. It is *He* that looks at me so piteously, so tenderly from the Cross. He seems to say, "I cannot move, though I am omnipotent, for sin

has bound me here. Gaze on Me, O my child, if you will, for I am helpless; gaze on your Maker, whether in contempt or in faith and love! Here I wait upon the Cross, the appointed time, the time of grace and mercy; here I wait till the end of the world, silent and motionless, for the conversion of the sinful and the consolation of the just; here I remain in weakness and shame, though I am so great in Heaven, patiently expecting my full catalogue of souls, who, when time is at length over, shall be the reward of my Passion and the triumph of my grace to all eternity.

O my soul, for how many Lents has the great God summoned Thee to the Cross to be His, and Thou art still unmoved; mysteries have passed before thine eyes that have converted sinners; words have fallen upon thine ears that have made saints: the words of the dying Christ—and thou hast not listened nor understood. This week I will, with Thy help, dear Lord, look upon Thee who art lifted up from the earth to draw men after Thee.

I will bend my faculties to contemplate in detail Thy blessed Passion. I will know nothing but Thee, and Thee crucified. I will look on Thy love-worn Face and read in its lines, its tear-stains and bloodstains, the record of the ravages of Divine Love, pent up and compressed within the all-too narrow confines of a finite Heart. Thus will I be won to Thee forever.

Resolutions: When shall I say these words to Thee? "It is finished". Dear Saviour, cause these Thy words to echo loudly in my heart, till they force me to some worthy return of Thy love. Thou art My Redeemer because Thou hast completed Thy one work. Thou hast never looked back. My salvation was the motive of Thy every act; it led Thee to the Cross. Thou hast done all on Thy part. Thy love is perfect.

Let me begin today so that at the end of life I may be ready to say to Thee, "It is finished", the one only true task of life is done. Thy love has won me entirely. I have given love for love. By Thy grace,

“I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do”.

One long period of my life is over; the doors of the Seminary have closed upon it. Alas, how I have wasted the bright years of my boyhood and youth! I gave Thee my heart long ago when I walked a First Communion boy from the Altar with the Host in my heart. It was only a boy's love. But even that I withdrew. Now I am a man, but as I think of the greatness of Thy love, I feel I still have little to offer. Thou hast given me all, take all! I give Thee my heart. I have come here to cleanse it by Thy Blood and to warm it by contact with Thine.

I trust I may now say with humbled and sincere accent, “Thou knowest Lord I love Thee”. In spite of my sins Thou dost make me the noblest of offers. The first robe of grace I have lost and Thou dost hold out to me the golden vestment of the priest. I consecrate myself to Thee forever; my memory that I may only dwell upon Thy mercy over me; my intellect that I may penetrate more and more into Thee;

my liberty that I may serve Thee alone. These hands and feet have become Thine. I want to do plenty of work for Thee. I wish to spend my life for Thee. At death merit and labor will be over. I wish above all to die the death of the good priest. So that when men shall come to bear away my worn body to some quiet spot of earth they may be able to say over my coffin, "He *finished* the work God gave him to do". Keep me faithful to the end! That is *Thy* work indeed. No holy priest on earth, no saint in glory, has ever pretended that aught in them has ever been accepted and crowned, save Thy own grace, merited for them when, on the Cross Thou didst cry,

Bouquet: "It is finished."

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

Adoration: See the central Cross on Calvary; the Sacred Body drooping towards the earth. It is the third hour past noon. The light has faded from the earth, the heavens are hung with sackcloth and nature is wrapt in tenebrae—like stillness and gloom.

The Son of God is dying on Calvary. I must not hurry away with the panic-stricken crowd, or dismiss the austere mystery from my mind. However painful, I must endure it to the end, for I, too, must pass by the way of death. I shall never imitate Jesus by being scourged, or crowned with thorns, or nailed to a cross; but I must *die*, I must imitate Him in *that*. He has taught me how to live. He must teach me how to die.

Draw me, then, Dear Saviour of men, to the side of Mary, to the foot of Thy Cross, to study Thee, to pity Thee, to worship Thee in Thy dying.

Dear Mother of Sorrows, I will see with thy eyes and worship with thy heart. Thou has endured to look upon the Eyes as they closed, the Head as its bowed in death, the Lips as they yielded their last sigh; not one movement of Hand or Foot, nor any tremor from the thorn-crowned Head to the torn Feet; nor one drop of the Precious Blood falling from thorn or nail escaped Thy adoring Heart.

“Juxta tecum pie flere,
Crucifixo condolere,
Donec ego vixero.”

Consideration: Our Lord did not die under compulsion; He was not subject to the powers of this world but they were subject to Him. He died under loving and free obedience to His Father's will; He died because He willed to die. When His time was come, we are told, “He steadfastly set His Face to go to Jerusalem”. His disciples were amazed and said, “Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?” But He persisted. With a vehemence unusual

with Him, He rebuked Peter who sought to constrain Him. And on the road He walked with an eager, quickened pace,—“He went before them.”

Again at the last supper He said to Judas, “That which thou dost, do *quickly*”. Then He preceded to the Garden beyond Kedron, though Judas knew the place; and when the band of officers came to seize Him, “Jesus *knowing* all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said to them, “I am He”. It pained Him that they should come with swords and clubs, thinking that He was not ready to die.

And with what calmness and majesty did He bear His sufferings, when they came upon Him, though by His agony in the Garden He showed how fully He felt their keenness; not thinking to be merely passive under the trial, but accounting it as a great occasion for a noble and severe surrender of Himself to His Father’s will.

While He hung on the Cross His Heart was intensely active, though He spoke but a few brief sentences. He offered Himself wholly, with the whole of His Soul, with

His whole advertance, a Mind awake, a sense acute, a living co-operation, a present, absolute intention. His Passion was an action: He lived most energetically, while He lay languishing, fainting, dying. Nor did He die, except by an act of the Will; He surrendered His Soul, He did not lose it. "Therefore doth the Father love me", He said, "because I lay down my Life that I may take it up again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of *Myself*".

There was, then, a day and an hour when Jesus lay dying. Let me think of it now. A night and a day have gone on since He entered into His atoning Passion with deliberate self-oblation in Gethsemane; and three hours since He gave Himself up to the Cross. Now He is ready to die. There He is, as Mary sees Him,—the same dear form, the same gentle face. The nails are not loosened; they hold Him still, and the blessed Hands and Feet are swollen round the wounds. But Mary notes the dreadful change—her mother's heart can here make no mistake.

"Non fallunt viscera matrem." He is consenting to die. He is paler and His limbs are more helpless. The Head is bowed upon the Breast, and she sees the whole of the thorny crown. His breath comes with difficulty. The words that have come painfully at intervals have ceased. Will there be one word more or has the last been said? "It is finished", was His farewell to earth. Now, unmindful of everything, He thinks but of God, reserving for Him alone His last thought, His last look.

How Mary watches Him! There are two gasping sobs—the next surely must be the last; suddenly the Sacred Head lifts and the Eyes are turned straight towards Heaven,—the lips part, and frame their last words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit". The Head droops towards Mary, the Eyes close, the Feet turn slightly on the nail that fastened them, the Heart is still and Jesus is dead.

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." It is still "Father". His first recorded word is "Father"—"Dost thou not know that I must be about My Father's

business?" and so He ends as He began with "Father". His is from first to last a life of perfect obedience. "I do always the things that please Him." "Obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross."

In the Garden of Olives He put forth the agonizing cry, "My Soul is sorrowful even unto death". Hanging on the Cross, the beatific vision recedes to the extreme summit of His human Soul whilst all else is invaded by darkness, withered in dryness, and drenched in bitterness; and He exclaims to His Father, "My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?" Yet in the depth of grief in the Garden with what resignation He surrendered Himself to the will of His heavenly Father! "Yet not My but Thine be done." And now, after thirty years of a silent life of toil and hardship, and three of wandering and public service, on a cruel cross where men have nailed Him, deserted by friends, in inner desolation of all heavenly feeling, stripped of all things, He finds in His heart the mighty love to give Himself up

with perfect trust and entire abandonment to the will of the Father. Resting His weary and exhausted Soul upon the divine strength for support, He breathes out His life in the words of oblation and surrender, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit". The worship is supreme, the atonement is perfect, the sacrifice complete.

Self-examination: I gaze upon those lifeless Features, grief-lined and bruised, but bearing the impress of a love stronger than death,—they speak to me still, they persuade me to give myself up to God with loving confidence.

Yes, my God, in spite of sins, or waste of time and grace and opportunities, in spite of neglect of responsibilities, of wrong-doing harmful to souls for whom Thou didst die:—in spite of shortcomings of every kind, I hope in Thee.

I know I have reason to fear—and I do fear—but my trust is greater than my fear; for my fear is based on myself, but my trust on Thee. . . I commit my course to Thee. To whom should I go but to

Thee. What others have to urge I know not; I have neither innocence nor yet true penitence—I have Thy mercy only. I have made myself undeserving of it, but when hast Thou ever treated me as I deserved? Where should I be now if justice and not mercy had had its way?

Petition: O my Lord and Saviour, in Thy Arms I am safe; keep me and I have nothing to fear; give me up and I have nothing to hope for. I know not what will come upon me before I die. I know nothing about the future; but I rely upon Thee. My future life will come under Thy care. Greater is Thy care for me than all the care I can take of myself. I pray Thee to give me what is good for me; I pray Thee to take from me whatever may imperil my salvation, I leave it all to Thee, because Thou knowest and I do not. Thou didst die on the Cross for me; Thou must love me. “I know in whom I have believed.”

Give me, above all else, to die just at that time and in that way which is most for Thy glory and best for my salvation.

There is a spot and there is an hour wherein I, who am now here in health, shall at last be in my agony. When and where and how death shall come upon me, I cannot know. Thy holy Will be done! Oh, Lord! Take what this world has given me but give me all Thy death has earned for me. Thou art my Saviour. Let me in that hour draw hope from Thy abandonment, comfort from Thy desolation, refreshment from Thy thirst, strength from Thy exhaustion, and life from Thy death. Give me, I beseech Thee, the holy Viaticum for my journey, and the consolation of Thy blessed Presence within and around me. "And though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for *Thou art with me.*" Give me the soothing touch of the holy oil of gladness for my agony. Give me, when all else fails me, Mary to hold me in her arms, to be a mother to me to the end.

"Christe, cum sit hinc exire,
Da per Matrem me venire
Ad palmam victoriae."

Give me blessed Joseph to stand on my right hand and my Angel Guardian to be the sentinel of my bed chamber, to keep the Evil one far from me. And give me the presence of a holy priest to keep my heart in union with Thee.

O yes, I trust Thee, my God, I trust Thee. And if I could choose my Judge I would choose Thee and no other. I know "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the *Living God*". Yet it is there I desire to fall when I die. My soul is my only one; I could not trust it except into the hands of Him Who made it. "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me."

Bouquet: Into the open refuge of Thy consoling Arms—into the Hands that were pierced for me, "In manus tuas, Domine, Commendo spiritum meum".

PART TWO

EASTERTIDE

EASTER JOY THE OUTCOME OF LENTEN SORROW

A MEDITATION FOR HOLY SATURDAY

Adoration: Adore Our Lord manifesting His risen Self to the mourning Magdalen in the Garden, and turning her sorrow into joy.

He first created a great love in her heart, and won her from sin. Next, He drew her to Calvary where He paid the price of her soul. He is her Saviour. He made her partaker of His Passion, and so He makes her partake of His Resurrection. She was faithful in seeking Him crucified, and she finds Him Risen.

Thus He fulfills in her His promise that those who seek shall find, and they who mourn shall be comforted.

Considerations: How faithfully the holy women were to Our Lord! They followed Him about during His preaching, ministering to Him of their substance.

They remained by Him, when the world turned from Him, sharing His shame. But faithful among the faithful was Mary Magdalen.

Our Lord had rescued her from sin and shame. He had cast out of her "seven devils". His love had not fallen, this time, upon an ungrateful heart. See her on Calvary, as painters have painted her, in her favorite posture. She is kneeling in anguish with lips pressed to the Blessed Feet that had set her on the road to Heaven: faithful when Apostles fled; staunch, while the earth rocked beneath her, and the Sun darkened, and her own race hurled insult at Our Blessed Lord in His agony. Who can separate her from the love of Christ? Converted once, she was faithful forever. How noble she is--the innocent, however holy, may well envy this poor penitent her love of Christ!

See her lingering at the grave, Good Friday night, in the posture of mourning, the friend, "sitting over against the sepulchre"! See her returning in the dim dawn of the morning after the Sabbath! She

had no home but the sepulchre of Jesus. Her heart was within the cold stone. She had seen Him die—she had seen Him buried. Now His Blessed Body was an object, a centre-point for love. Nothing else was left. The Voice, the Living Presence, the strong and tender words; all this was past.

So she thought. But there was the mangled Form, lying in the grave. Near It she would still feel herself near Him. This she would honor, this she would love and worship, and upon this she would lavish her costliest and her best. She would do what she could.

And so she comes, bearing sweet spices, and lo, the grave is open, and the Body gone! Her heart has nothing to stay itself upon, and she is comfortless. It seems to her now that she could bear the Way of Sorrows—the Crucifixion—the last hour—the last cry—better than this. For the moment it is the ruin of all that was left to love. It is the sacrifice of her all. She is enduring the dark night of the soul.

And thus she lingers beside the grave when her companions have gone away. As she weeps, she stoops, and looks down into the sepulchre, and sees two angels in white, the one sitting at the head, and the other at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had lain. They say to her: "Woman, why weepest *thou*?"

What penitent has a right to weep at Easter? Had not this woman done penance for her evil life? Had she not torn all base affections from her heart, dared the world's shame, and flung herself on Calvary, at the feet of Him whom she had pierced by her sins? Truly, she has a right, above others, to the first Easter joy.

It is Easter now, but she knows it not. There can be no Easter without Jesus. The once foul woman is the familiar of Angels, but what are angels to her, or their words of comfort when she is heart-hungry for the Body of Christ? "They have taken away *my Lord*, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Blessed Mourner! In you the old prom-

ise is made good: "They who seek Me early shall find Me". You have been faithful to Jesus in His Passion, behold your reward is at hand! "Fear not you—you seek Jesus who was crucified" (St. Matt. XXVIII, 5). You have been partaker of His sufferings, so shall you share in His joy and triumph. He whom you seek is not lying before your eyes, cold and motionless; because He is already close to you, did you but know it, coming to you with a love greater far than is yours for Him. Seek no longer the living among the dead, turn from the empty grave, look up and be comforted! "In the evening weeping shall have place, and in the morning gladness" (Ps. 29).

With her whole heart thus absorbed in her grief, Magdalen turns away—and lo, Jesus Himself is standing before her! It is He, but for the moment she knows Him not. The association of the spot makes her fancy that it is the keeper of the garden, and in the eager hope that he can explain the secret of the empty grave, she exclaims in an agony of appeal—"Sir, if thou hast

taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away". (St. John XX, 15.) With her there is but one "Him" in the whole world!

What pleasure to Our Lord, to find a heart so noble and so loving! Jesus says to her "Mary"! It is but a single word—her own name—but in speaking it, He brings back to her ear the awful and tender tone, jealously guarded in her memory. It goes at once to her heart. The voice reveals His own Beloved Self. "Rabboni"—Oh my Master, she cries, and falls at His Feet, speechless with her transport. Her search is ended—her tears are dried—she has found Jesus!

"Jesu, spes poenitentibus,
Quam pius es petentibus!
Quam bonus es quaerentibus!
Sed quid invenientibus?"

Self-examination: If I have no keen feelings of joy at Easter, is it not because I have had no keen feeling of sorrow during Lent. Do I expect heavenly comfort to wait upon earthly comfort, whereas

Easter joy succeeds Lenten sorrow? If I put the austere side of my religion from me, I shall have no true or deep religion. "Multi quaerunt Jesum,—sed non crucifixum."

Magdalen was not daunted by the Cross. Her eyes were full of the wounded Body,—she had within her heart the Cross, the nails, and the thorns. She sought Jesus crucified, and she found Him risen.

Does Easter morning find me searching in the Garden, because I feel the need of a *Saviour*? If I do not feel the need of a Saviour, it is because I do not realize my sinfulness. If my sin is not a pang at my heart, I shall not fall at my Saviour's Feet. Have I put lightly away movements of remorse, and inward upbraidings, as mere scruples? Have I excused myself from mortification on the score of health? Has Lent been a break in the course of the year? Have I taken scandal from the Cross and yielded to the dread of Holy Week, and the chill shadow of Calvary? If my conscience has not been aroused, and, I have not been driven by inward compul-

sion to Christ Crucified, a cloud will rest on my Easter. My heart will be cold and my faith dim. I shall not realize inwardly what I behold in the Liturgy. The Angels of God will not comfort me. I shall receive Jesus Easter Morning in Holy Communion, but I shall not be thrilled as was Magdalen in the Garden. My heart will be still hard and unfeeling—and hardness of heart is but the absence of love.

I shall not have loved much, though I have been much forgiven.

Resolutions: Another Lent, please God, I will be more in earnest. I will not readily forget that I am a penitent, with so much of my life wasted. I will attach myself to the holy company that gathers round Mary on Calvary. I will not think it a slight matter that the Son of God should hang on the Cross, and give His Blood for me. My sins shall grow black to me on Good Friday. I will look upon Him whom I have pierced. And Jesus crucified will look down upon me and make me more tender-hearted, penitent and loving. I will seek Him in the tomb to pour

balm on His wounds, for only those are happy at Easter who, with Magdalen, offer the full conversion of the heart, who are generous in repentance, and are faithful to Jesus and Him Crucified. To these comes the Easter greeting,

Spiritual Bouquet: "Fear not *you*—you seek Jesus who was crucified; He is not here, He is risen."

THE EASTER RECOMPENSE

THE TOIL IN THE NIGHT AND THE REWARD IN THE MORNING

Adoration: Adore Our Lord as He appears in the grey shadows of morning on the shore of Tiberias, after His resurrection, and looks with yearning love on His Apostles at their labor on the sea. His Heart is with them.

How He loves His priests! He seems to be concerned with them alone. They bring Him souls. He loves them because He loves souls. Hear Him call to them in their weariness! See how He blesses their labor, draws them to Himself, gathers them about Him on the shore, serving them with His own Hands when their labor is done!

Considerations: The Apostles are back in Galilee for a last lesson, for a last visit home before they leave green Galilee and its blue lake for ever.

Peter and his companions return for the moment to the labor familiar to most of them. They go a-fishing. They set sail in the evening. The villagers sit at the doors of their cabins and watch the boats go out; then, as darkness comes on, the lights in the homes are extinguished one by one, and the fishermen are left in the company of the lonely sea and their own inner thoughts. Out on the waters at night what are the musings of Peter and his companions? In the wakeful night do not the deepest things in the heart come up for distinct thought? The human heart does not change. This sea then is full of the unseen Presence of Jesus. They are at their old labor, but He stands between themselves and the past, and it is illumined. Around this sea they had lived with Him; and they now feed on recollections which seem to give Him back to them. A sweetness falls upon their memories. The past is gone, and they begin to seize its meaning. In days gone by, this very boat attended upon Our Lord. He chose Peter's barque and made it His

own. It was almost His home; at times, His pulpit and His place of rest and refuge in fatigue. There is about it a token of something beyond itself. Jesus had blessed it with a miraculous draught of fishes, and had twice quelled the storms that beat upon it. He had called Peter and His brother-fishermen to be "Fishers of men."

And their real life's work begins to take shape in their minds. Now, they are tried and chosen. Thoughts piece themselves together, linking the lower to the higher world after the manner of the Master till the night's toil itself is charged with profound meaning, and all turns to symbol. The fishery is mystic; the boat is the Church; the sea is the world, "bitter with salt and troubled with storms"; and they themselves are "fishers of men" to draw from the depths of ignorance, misery and sin poor souls that wander, restless and at random, through the vast, unquiet world. Such is their lot. Not an easy one surely. They cannot but feel its hardship. Our Lord is no longer visible with them in the boat, nor does He appear

to them on the sea. They belong to time; Christ to eternity. At the Last Supper He said, "And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to Thee" (St. John, XVII, 11); and again, "So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you." (St. John, XVI, 22).

Faith cannot be as sight, or night as the day. The unquiet sea cannot be as the solid shore; the season of labor as the season of rest. The toil is on the sea, the rest is on the shore. How patient and great-hearted and devoted should those be who would "catch men"! How much they need the blessing of Christ! But how surely will the priest be blessed at last in his work, if he lives by faith and in obedience! How surely will he be rewarded in Heaven for the pains and trials of his priesthood!

Now, look at the Apostles on the sea! They drop the nets in the old haunts and draw them up empty. Here is a trial. It is hard to labor without visible results.

They try here and there, all the night long. Nothing. They are muscle-weary, wet and depressed. At last the dawn streaks the sea from the hills of Bashan; the dark night of stars has waned; the day is breaking. "In the evening weeping shall have place, and in the morning gladness." (Ps. XXIX). There on the sands where the waves roll listlessly is a Figure of One whom they do not recognize in the twilight. But it is Our Lord. A voice of inquiry comes over the waters; then the order, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship". In simple docility of mind they take counsel as of one more skilful in their art than themselves. And lo, they are hardly able to lift the net with the big haul!

The blessing awakes with overwhelming force the memory of former days. St. John fixes upon the Figure his deep eyes, and discerns Him not so much by ear or eye as by the sure intuition of a pure heart. "*Domínus est!*" John is the first to discern the Lord, but Peter the first to act: the chief Apostle plunges at once

into the water, and then flings himself all wet at His Master's Feet. The others follow after; Peter drags to land the silvery, moving mass of fishes; work is done. No more labor for them now on the fitful sea; they are safe with Christ on the shore where all is calm, and pure, and bright and heavenly. Jesus saith to them: "Come and dine". How consoling this is! Christ prepares a meal on the shore for a few fishermen whom He loves. They are His own, and He Himself feeds them. They are His priests; they have labored for Him; see how He rewards them! They feed with eye and heart upon Him, enjoying the sweetness of His looks. Their hearts are so still with peace and reverence in His Blessed Presence that they do not question Him, but rest in Him, transported out of themselves, "Knowing that it was the Lord".

Self-examination: In the Seminary I am toiling for souls. The life is ordered to fit me for the priesthood. How then am I using my time? How do I study? How do I pray? What victories do I gain over

self? Is my personal influence with my fellows exerted on the side of Christ? Am I preparing to be a fisher of men? The labor of preparation is long and stern and constant. I am in labors from my youth and not in enjoyment. Is my love strong enough to carry me through seasons of darkness or discouragement? Are there not moments, as the months go by when I do not see how what I am doing all day long is related to the saving of souls? I am toiling like a fisher in the night. Or again, I labor and seem to take nothing. I cannot see the travail of my soul. I do not seem to be successful. I need faith and obedience.

Petition: Let me, rising above the apparent causes, see Thee in whatever happens. Let me say: This is Thy doing! This is Thy love! In this it is Thou who are trying me, or turning me away from creatures to Thyself.

Dear Beloved Master, give me grace to keep my labor under the blessing of obedience. Let me pierce appearances and discover Thee where Thou art! Let me see

Thee in my superiors, for they hold authority from Thee; let me take their work for Thine. How easy will obedience become, if I can only remind myself, "Dominus est"! Make me feel how much Thou art to me, how interested Thou art in my work. Make me learn how much I need Thy Presence and Thy blessing on my work. Give me the vivid faith of St. John to discern Thee in the Blessed Sacrament where Thou art looking through the brass door on my toil in the Seminary; give me the love of Peter to come with eagerness to Thee, day by day, to refresh my soul with The Bread which Thou dost give in the early morning.

Resolutions: I resolve with Thy help to be a good seminarian so that I may become a good priest. I will learn now in order later to teach; I will put down self in order to have an Apostle's heart; I will sanctify myself in order that the souls to whom I shall one day minister may be holy.

Dear Saviour of men, deign to bless my priesthood in the years to come with a

large haul of souls, call me in the dawn of the blessed eternity and feed me when life is done, with the Blessed Vision of Thyself for Eternity.

Bouquet: "Venite et prandete!"

EASTER CONSOLATION

Adoration: The first rays of Easter morning are falling on a broken grave in Joseph's garden, on calm white figures of immortal spirits in the very tomb, and on hurrying women stirring with a new truth which the world sadly needs.

Hear the Angels' comforting the mourners, "Why weepest thou? He is *risen*; He is *not here*". No sorrow can abide Easter. Let me with the holy women fall down in adoration before Jesus risen from the grave. "To whom shall I go in bereavement, O my Saviour, but to Thee! Thou art the Resurrection and the Life! The first fruits of them that sleep. Thou hast destroyed the power of death, and dried up the tears of mourners who resort to the grave. Blessed be Thy name!"

Considerations: How sad Easter Day first opened! The Gospel shows the women in the gloom, numb with grief, groping their way to the grave in the

Garden with a sense of utter loss. Truly death is here; it is palpable.

"Who shall roll us away the stone?" they were saying.

I. How heavily the grave-stone weighs on the human heart! It is the very symbol of separation, of silence, of ashes. See Mary lingering about the grave! She finds the stone rolled away, indeed, but she feels only more keenly the vacancy and the chill of death. The tomb is broken; even the Body is gone. She peers into the dark opening, and sees the very graveclothes. How desolate the grave was before Mary found Jesus there! This stricken woman may be taken for the moment as the type of those who, "*ignorant concerning them that sleep*", have no Easter hope, who sit beside the grave with empty hearts and feed on fading memories. Who are in poignant sorrow because they have love without hope. Whose minds are all with the past. Or, perhaps, they have intimation of a something, they know not what—vague, shadowy, uncertain in the world to come. Who think of

the dead as shadows of reality, mere wraiths of living persons. Who make pathetic endeavors to preserve the poor body from the decay of the grave, feeding their hearts with ashes. O how much these need the consolation of Easter! How sad, too, is the lot of those who, though they confess faith in the eternal world beyond the grave, have lost Catholic communion with the dead! Who give up their dead at once to the power of death and let them go, appalled by the thought of the grave-stone. Who, peering into the tomb, note the symbols of decay; who have no vision of faith; receive no heavenly message to comfort them; and leaving the silence of death unbroken, send no sweet voice of love to their dead, but drop them out of their prayers and bear them no longer in their hearts when they draw near to God. How much all these mourners need the bright view into the eternal world that burst upon Magdalen as she stood beside the Grave in the Garden! She was blessed by grace; she had something above sense and reason to comfort

her; she had light from God to see Angels in the gloom, to see through her tears the outlines of the world beyond the grave. She had the grace, to see death destroyed, to find the stone rolled away, love and communion restored with the dead, to meet Jesus face to face. Her cry of rapture still thrills all mourners, "I have *seen* the Lord". Oh, how all the world needs such a grace! The home with the white ribbon knotted to the door needs Easter. The darkened home where the children watch beside the Mother's body needs Easter. Who can heal such sorrows but only Christ, who brought life to every bereaved home He entered. Jesus has healed this universal sorrow by His resurrection.

II. To the heart-broken Our Lord shows Himself after the Resurrection, and he is unchanged and unchilled by the grave. Death has taken nothing from Him, but He has in His own person taken all from death. He rises in the very Body which hung on the Cross, and was laid in the grave. He retains the stigmata of Good Friday. He appeals to these wounds

to witness to His identity. He is not a shadowy spirit but the same Lord He has always been. Magdalen catches the old tone in His voice. His disciples clasp His feet, and touch His sacred Person. He takes up, not His Body only, but in some measure His old life again. He rises a man and not a mere Spirit. He returns to His own, and looks with love upon them. He hastens from one to another. He is not for them a new Redeemer. He is their old Master and Friend. He calls Mary, Peter and Thomas by name. He meets His disciples in the old haunts. He reminds them of words that He had spoken whilst yet with them. He is held by the memory of the past in its sweetness and beauty, and clings with unchanged affection to persons and places. He is the same in His love for penitents. However changed, He wishes to be recognized as the same. All the lovely things that were, are not so much altered as transfigured. "Jesus yesterday, today, and the same forever". (Heb. 13.)

III. As it was with Jesus so it shall

be with us. His Resurrection is not the pledge only, it is the prototype of ours. "It hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him" (I John 3). Those who die in Christ shall be like Him. Because He lives, they shall also live. Though they cease to act before us through the senses, they still live as they lived before. The persistence of name and influence in this world after death is a mere shadow: the *person* must live. Our own are not dead but living. We must not think of them as lying in the grave. "To depart and be *with* Christ" is St. Paul's definition of dying. They are with Christ. "This day," said Our Lord to a dying man on Calvary, "thou shalt be *with Me* in Paradise." "I go to prepare a place for you," said Our Lord to His disciples, "that where I am you also may be." We always find the tomb empty. God's angels always wonder to find us still seeking the living among the dead. "They are not here," they are ever saying, "You have

not committed them to the cold and dark grave; they are *with Christ*".

If we too are in Christ no real separation occurs, when to the sight of men our friends die. We clutch at the body like Magdalen who would detain Our Lord in the lower state of sense, thinking Him lost to her because not seen. We need faith. There is indeed a void before our eyes after a bereavement, and a pang in our sensitive hearts. We cannot approach the dead longer through the body but through the soul. But in Christ we may be closer to them than ever before. Whatever we have lost, if we have not lost Jesus, we have lost nothing. We know Whom we believe. Jesus cannot fail us. "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: and everyone who liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die". Love, therefore can never fail. "One never loses," says St. Augustine, "one never loses those whom one loves in Him whom we can never lose." Our departed retain, as Jesus retained, all that is noble or beauti-

ful of the affections of earth, only intensified by union with Him. While we think of them and pray for them, they remember, they love us. They think, and we are in their thoughts; they pray and we are in their prayers. "Itaque consolamini invicem in verbis istis."

Self-examination: What joy and peace I am losing, if I mourn in desolation over the dead! Shall I act as though all was lost, and life was blasted, because one I love is gone to Christ? Is my mind all with the past as if I had no radiant hope of the future? Do I think of the dead as dead, or as living with Christ? Do I give them their old place in my heart and in my prayers? Do I speak their dear names when I take my beads in hand, or when I kneel before the Tabernacle?

Resolutions: With every loss I suffer, I shall strive by Thy grace, O Jesus, to become, more and more, strange to this lower world of sense, and to turn to Thee.

I hope to feel, at such times, that Thou art, though unseen, beside me, comforting me as Thou didst Martha in her be-

reavement by Thy blessed promise and saying to me, "Believest thou *this*?" "Lord, I believe!" They who go before me with the sign of faith are safe with Thee. Through Thee I will still live with them, in sacred intercourse by faith, till, in the blessed Easter-tide of Eternity, Thou shalt restore them to my sight.—"Et sic semper cum Domino erimus".

I must guard this truth as my dearest possession. I must keep my faith alive and warm by practice of that other world, by daily thought of it, by living up to it, especially by communion with the blessed departed. I must not think them dead but alive in God.

Bouquet: I believe in the resurrection of the dead.

THE EASTER PEACE

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

Adoration: Let me, together with the Apostles, worship Our Lord, Easter night, in the closed room at Jerusalem. He is risen, indeed. He is again all He once was to the devoted group, and much more. His coming is an overwhelming revelation. Does He not come to them out of the grave after the mystery of Calvary? He died as the world's Saviour. If He had remained in the grave then the power of death and sin would be unbroken. "If Christ be not risen," says St. Paul, "ye are still in your sins." Now the Apostles realize that He is, as He said, the one Saviour of the world.

Adoration wells up in their hearts as He holds out to them His members marked with the palpitating stigmata. He died on Friday, to atone, He rises, this day to prove the acceptance with God of His death, and

to complete His work. Now He comes for the very purpose of making them ministers of reconciliation who shall apply His atonement to man. How awed they are as He breathes the Holy Spirit into them, gives them to be what He has been to the world, and says, "Whose sins you shall forgive are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain are retained"! (St. John, XX, 23).

Considerations: From the dead, Our Lord stands before His Apostles, and says, "Peace be to you". The greeting is not a mere formality but a mysterious communication. Before His Passion He said, "Not as the world giveth, do I give to you". (St. John XIV, 27.) He comes to give divine assurance that His atonement and death has re-established peace between God and man. He shows them the sacred Wounds which are the price of our peace. There is nothing more to bear: God is appeased, the demon vanquished, and pardon won for all sin. The peace of Christ sinks into their hearts.

And now He desires to make these men

His ministers of pardon and peace to the world without. Our Saviour has done all that He purposed to do in His own Person, and what no other but the one only Redeemer could do. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." He provided, but did not give salvation when He suffered. He would impart the gift of His Passion to men one by one. He does not then rise from the grave on a new world, but on the sinful world, not yet in effect reconciled to God. He is risen indeed but the world is not. But, though His visible contact with the world is broken, He will not leave His work incomplete. At the last supper He said, "And now I am not in the world but *these* are in the world, and I come to Thee". (St. John, XVII 11.) He will save the world through His Apostles.

For this great task, He proceeds to fit them. "As the Father hath sent Me," He says, "so I send you." (St. John XX, 21.) How lovely are the priests of God! They are joined to Christ for the salvation of the world. Who will think of them,

after this, as no more than other men? They are transfigured in Christ, and His blessed office shines round them as a halo.

Our Lord had been sent Himself into the world by the Father, now in turn He sends His priests.

But He does not send them unequipped. He gives them His Spirit. He, the Son of God, took our nature from the Blessed Virgin through the Holy Ghost, and before the outpouring of the public ministry the fulness of the Spirit within Him was manifest at His baptism: in the unction and power of that Spirit He had entered upon the work which has now been accomplished. If men are to carry on His Mission, they also must be endowed with the Spirit. Hence He breathes on His Apostles, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit". What may they not expect after this action! When He had sent them out on local trial missions, He sent them with power that astounded them—power to preach, to cure oriental leprosy, and even to cast out demons. Yet He transferred these signal powers to them by a word.

The power of miracle, however is not the highest power of Christ, nor could it meet the deepest need of man. The root of misery is in the heart itself. It is guilt that troubles him profoundly. Jesus came on earth to save sinners, He exercised, as Son of Man, the power of pardon in His ministry. He has just atoned for all sin. Now that His Hands are pierced, He has more to give—pardon, deep as the malice of men, free as God's mercy.

Yes, He is going to leave with His priests the new power of pardon here on earth. He breathes into them for the recreation of mankind the Holy Spirit, Who is the vital Breath of God, proceeding from the Father and the Son. The first Adam was made by the Breath of God a living soul; the last Adam is a life-giving Spirit, able to breathe into His fellow-men the very breath of eternal life. The act of breathing is the outward sign of inward spiritual quickening; Christ gives His Apostles power to infuse new vitality into the world. "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I send you. Whose

sins you shall forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain are retained." By His absolving priests, He raises dead souls to the life of grace. Easter glory ever shines round the confessional, for the grace of the sacrament is the grace of spiritual resurrection. This power of the resurrection of Christ is operating in the Church all the time. I see in fancy long lines of men, women and children moving towards the confessional with firm faith that there, in virtue of what Our Lord said the first Easter night, their sins are forgiven them. There they are, from age to age victims of every weakness, befooled by the facination of sense and the sophistry of reason—poor prodigals desecrated in soul and body, in whose breasts Christ was dead—who rest not on their own sorrow and remorse, but on the words of Christ and His divine communication, and seek from the priest the authentic pardon of their sins. They know under the seal of Christ, that, if they act sincerely with His human minister, they are absolved in Heaven as on earth.

And in a transport of joy, they kiss the very wood of the confessional, glorifying God who hath given such power to men.

Self-examination: With this blessed mystery in my thought I turn to my own life, and what do I find? Can I forget the times since childhood when I stood in utter need of the priest's absolution? How wretched I was! With what dread and yet with what longing I looked towards the parish confessional. I have felt the piercing conversion from sin to grace. How light my step from the confessional to the altar railing! How chaste and beautiful the stars over head in the deep sky! How tranquil the night's rest with fresh grace in my heart! How bright the awakening Communion morning! All evil within and without seemed exorcised, for the moment, by the thrilling power of the priest's absolution. All things became new with my consciousness of risen life. I had become a child of the Resurrection. How sweet it is to have received this grace from Christ! How devoutly I should linger over the grace of absolution! My

life is a witness to it: for what should I be without it?

Is there then a token about me as of one whom God has blessed with the signal mercy? Am I more thoughtful than men generally? Is there a habitual look of gratitude in my eyes? Have I for the Sacrament of Penance special devotion such as St. Francis of Sales would have innocent children cultivate for the baptismal font?

Resolutions: Dear Jesus it was Thyself Who said, "To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much". O make this to be fulfilled in my case!

Let me ponder well the pardon I have received. Let me show something for the great things Thou hast done to me. Bless me with a special call to the ministry of the confessional; and prepare me for the time when I shall enter the tribunal, not as seeker but as dispenser of pardon.

Let me now, out of gratitude, strive for the sacred knowledge, and the graces befitting a confessor who would save many souls. Put meekness and compassion, first

in my heart and then in my face and voice so that poor sinners may seek Thee in me.

And when in the ministry I come to hear confessions, let me first sink to my knees before the Tabernacle, and say:—

“Dear Saviour, behold the group around my box are coming to Thee in me. They know that I hold office and power from Thee. They are venturing upon me because they hope to find me Christ to them. Oh let me not fail them! This or that one Thou hast found stricken by the wayside of life, and art entrusting to me with the tender personal appeal, ‘Curam illius habe’.”

I will strive to keep my heart all the while in unison with Thy Sacred Heart; I will hold Thy Crucifix in my hand, and will say to each what it prompts me to say. And so, with Thy blessing, will I make fruitful the share Thou hast given me in the sacred communication of the first Easter night:

Bouquet: “Whose sins *you* shall forgive are forgiven them”. (St. John, XX, 23.)

EASTER COMMUNION

THE DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS

Adoration: Let us adore Jesus, rising from the grave, and radiating life and immortality. Thou art, O Jesus, "The Resurrection and the Life". Thou art the source of new life to the world,—the beginning of a new creation. Through union with thee we live to God. We have eternal life through faith in thee and through Thy holy sacraments, most of all through vital contact with Thy risen Body in Holy Communion. For Thou hast said; "He that eateth my Flesh hath Everlasting Life, and I will raise him up at the last day".

Considerations: Jesus suffered by His death no separation from men, no loss of power, no loss of real presence in this world. He is not as a dead man, who lingers in our memory by a faint posthumous life, but a living, life-giving presence forever. "Death hath no more dominion over Him." His life is even multi-

plied as the grain cast into the earth. He begins more than ever to live, not only in His own person but in us. His life is transferred into us, especially by the Holy Eucharist. For this is, chiefly, the means He has chosen to maintain, after Baptism, living relation with men.

If men really believed that Christ came to abide in His followers they would see how proper the Blessed Sacrament is to realize this purpose. Nothing less will do, if we are to live by Him. "He that eateth Me, the same also liveth by Me."

How much there is Eucharistic about the Easter apparitions of Our Lord!

I. Though He has died, He becomes *really present* again to men. He is not a ghost. "See my Hands and My Feet, that it is *I Myself!*" "Handle and see, for a *spirit* hath not hands and feet as ye see Me to have!"

He will neither forget, nor be forgotten; He will overcome the sense of distance and aloofness which the grave makes. The grave has not chilled His love for us. He has no remote interest in us, His Heart

is *here*. And so He takes up His interrupted relations with us at the point where they were broken off. Again He shares in our life, eats our bread, consoles the saddened and depressed, walks with men on the old roads, blesses their labor from the lake shore, and reunites His scattered disciples into one body again—He Himself being the inner spirit of unity. All this seems to bring Him near us in the last degree. And what are these blessings but tokens of the real, abiding Presence.

II. While He comes close to men after His resurrection, there is a new mystery about Him. He is in the flesh, but lives no longer in the old order as the risen Lazarus does, for the Gospel speaks not of meetings with His disciples but of manifestations. He is felt to be close to them at all times, and, in some way beyond the laws of nature, He manifests Himself, from place to place, where the need is,—in the upper room, in the inn at Emmaus, upon the mountain, and on the lake shore. His body, so real that it may be handled and touched, passes without difficulty

through a shut door, and vanishes as a shadow leaving no trace. The mystery is above our comprehension. He is the same searching, penetrating, tender, loving, yet authoritative Person as before, and this in most inimitable ways. At the same time, Jesus of the Resurrection differs somewhat from Jesus of the ministry. Not so much Himself as His condition is altered for He has passed through the grave. An intuition or a reassurance of faith is needed to recognize Him. There is a remove from natural conditions, a sort of veil about Him. Magdalen did not at first recognize Him in the garden; the Apostles were afraid in the upper room, and thought they saw a spirit; at the lake side they knew Him, but "none durst ask Him, Who art Thou"; on the road to Emmaus He joined two disciples; "but their eyes were held that they should not know Him". He accustoms His disciples little by little to discover Him under other than the natural appearance; to recognize Him in dimness and shadow; to feel Him though invisible, beside them; to replace His visible, by a

sacramental Presence. He makes them feel that sense in no way breaks or weakens their connection with Him. Magdalen may not cling to Him as if by the hold of the sense, for His state is no longer earthly. She must apprehend Him by faith. And this is not to lose Him, but to gain Him, by a closer personal union than by sense. "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed", Jesus said to the doubting Thomas. His death then has made *some* difference. We can live with Him no longer as before; His Presence hereafter though real as heretofore is not to be one of sense. We must have *faith* for *sight*. Nevertheless, we *can* (praised be His name!) live with Him still as truly as His apostles before His death in a real intercourse; He provided for our need "the day before He died" in the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist. With these hints and tokens of the Holy Eucharist in mind, how significant is every circumstance in the apparition to the two disciples at Emmaus! Cleophas was one of these, the other is unnamed. Cleo-

phas belonged in Emmaus, a little village about eight miles from Jerusalem. The two are going thither from the capital, saddened men they walk, and talk of what is in their hearts,—of Jesus and His death. His death had been an awful shock to them. The Kingdom of Heaven had failed to come, and things were at an end. He was buried and their hopes were buried with Him. “We *were* hoping”, they said “that it was He that should have redeemed Israel.” They had heard, indeed, of the empty tomb but the empty tomb is not the same as the Risen Christ. The Crucifixion had obscured everything; their minds are numb and in spiritual confusion.

Here, now, are two men who had followed Christ, losing heart, and quitting Jerusalem. Can this any longer be a matter of moment to Jesus? We should have said, “Let them go!” They should have been faithful to Him. Had they not heard Him say He would arise? Did not the women bring them this very morning an Easter greeting from the angels in the broken grave? This is our way of think-

ing; but is it Christ's way? Did He not say He had come to the sick, rather than the well; to the lost sheep of Israel? Once I know this much, I am sure now where Jesus will soon be found. But hold! That *was* true, that *was* His way before His death, but is it His way *now*? Remember too this is Easter Day—His day of triumph, the first day of rest He has had since the Incarnation, the first moment the shadow of the Cross has been lifted from His Soul. And these are not Apostles, even, they are but two ordinary men in need. No matter! Look and see how the dreary road to Emmaus is brightened by the blessed Easter light! Who shall think, after this, the Real Presence—unlikely or unworthy of Jesus? The two wayfarers hear the fall of feet, and presently a Stranger draws near, touched by their grief-lined countenances and their evident need. Their eyes are held, they do not recognize Him, but it is *Jesus*. "Jesus Christ yesterday, today, and the same forever!" "And He said to them, what are these discourses that you hold with another

as you walk, and are sad?" His affections have not been atrophied by death, nor chilled by the tomb; (St. Luke, XXIV, 17) ; our needs still touch Him and bring Him near us. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things that were concerning Him". (St. Luke, XXIV, 27.) He gave, perhaps, two hours of His Easter Day to these two poor men!

The time went quickly by for them. Now they are close to their journey's end. The Stranger would have left them, and passed on: He was saying farewell to them. But they could not part with One to Whom, they felt they owed so much. The sun was already sinking in the West. He had cheered them and they dreaded the loneliness of the night; they could not do without Him. "Stay with us!" they cried. "Stay with us!" here's the cry for His *abiding* Presence. He did not intend to walk the way of life a short stretch, to lift up the minds and warm the hearts of one passing generation, and then go away and leave the rest of us to darkness

and lonesomeness. He abides: "Having loved His own"... "He loved them to the end". He consents to stay with the two disciples, and together they take their places at a table on which a simple supper of bread and wine is laid.

He had done them a service. They no longer consider Him a mere Stranger of the road, they draw Him as a welcome guest to their board—the reserved symbol of *friendship*. The supper is the very instrument which the Master Himself chose and transformed to get into intimacy with men.

And now, note the mystery! He does not wait as a guest to be *served*, but becomes *the Host*, himself. Exerting an authority at once gentle and irresistible, He takes the bread, and blesses It and gives It to them. We know what bread He gives. "The Bread that I will give is My Flesh and for the life of the world." These disciples knew what had passed in the Supper-Room the night before He died. And as they received, a flood of light was poured into their souls. They "discerned the Body

of the Lord". "And their eyes were opened and they knew Him". It was Christ! But how much more! How glorious, how majestic! They gazed at Him: and as they gazed, the outline of His Form became fainter. No door was opened; there was no visible movement, no observed retreat; they stretched forth their hands, and lo, where only just now He had sat, there was vacancy! He had given Himself to them, yet He had vanished from sight. They had Him in the heart and not before their eyes. They had received their Easter Communion and their joy was complete.

Examination: Jesus draws near me at Eastertide.

Have I not walked and talked with Him in my morning meditations? Does He not strive by His Blessed Easter light to open my mind to the meaning of His humiliations? Have I been falling away from discipleship because of the Cross; going down to the city of human consolation? Do I understand Him better? Has Easter Day been less blessed to me than

to the two disciples at Emmaus? Is not Jesus my Consoler on the way. Do I appreciate the Real Presence? Has His presence been the peace and sunshine of these blessed days? Have I not been His guest? Have I not been at the Table with Jesus? Has He not broken and give to me?

Petitions and Resolutions: I have received a precious grace of illumination which I must not waste. I must not let the glow of Easter fervor die away and leave me where I was. I have been near Jesus, and my heart has burned within me. I must live in a holier intimacy with Him in the Blessed Sacrament. I am His disciple. I will look to Him for light and strength. The hundred associations of the season will twine themselves round His adorable Person. I shall invigorate my feeble life, day by day, by Communion with Him.

Stay with me! Dark shadows gather round me. The gloom which is not Thine, falls on me. I am nothing. I have little command of myself. I can not do what

I would. I am disconsolate and sad. I want something I know not what. It is *Thou* that I want, though I so little understand this.

Bouquet: "Mane nobiscum, Domine, quoniam advesperascit."

THE DOUBT OF THOMAS AND HIS CONFESSION OF FAITH

Adoration: Let me worship Jesus showing Himself the eighth day after His resurrection to Thomas. He comes for the sake of this one man, and gives him the evidence he craves.

How dear to Our Lord must be the faith of one whom He selects to bear witness of Him to the people! Let me, recalling the intimacy Jesus allows me, above other men, with His sacred teaching and Person, identify myself with Thomas, and sink down at His Feet in adoration, crying,

“Dominus meus et Deus meus!”

Considerations: I. The Doubt of Thomas: After Easter-day, there remained in Jerusalem, one Apostle whose sorrow had not been turned into joy. Thomas was not with his brethren when Jesus appeared to them. And when they told him, “We have seen the Lord”, he was unconvinced.

Nothing could convince him but the evidence of his senses: he must see for himself; he must handle for himself the marks of the Crucifixion before he would believe that the Body which had been nailed to the Cross and pierced with a lance had risen from the grave.

He had been a devoted Apostle. When Our Lord, on receiving the tidings of Lazarus' sickness, proposed to go again into Judea, when the Jews had recently sought to stone Him, it was Thomas who turned to the rest and said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him". (St. John, XI, 16.)

He loved his Master. He saw the others peaceful and happy in their faith. Doubt was a pain to him. It entered his mind and poisoned his thoughts. He had a keen sense of the difficulties of the mystery and he yielded too much to his temperament which was melancholic, or, perhaps, he held to the use of reason over much. When, for instance Jesus had said to His Disciples, "Whither I go you know, and the way you know" (St. John, XIV, 4), it was

Thomas who objected, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and *how* can we know the way?" He demands an explanation. He would not easily forego the use of his reason. His doubt may even have had a moral cause and may have been marked by wilfulness. The very terms on which alone he would give in to the truth,—a marvelous demand,—“Unless I shall see in His Hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into His Side I shall not believe”,—suggest a fixity of will in his private opinion. He held to one sort of evidence, the evidence of his senses, and he found it hard to accept the mysterious on testimony. He had not yet the spirit of faith. Faith is acceptance on testimony, and not such experience at first hand, as those seek who would apply the microscope, the crucible, and the scalpel to religious truth.

Moreover, Thomas thought it hard he had not the evidence the rest had. He was not content with what was sufficient. Now the evidence for religion is just what it is and no more, in order to satisfy reason,

rightly informed and disciplined, and yet to leave room for merit. If I could not help believing, there would be no occasion for meritorious faith. I should have no choice about it; and my assent would imply nothing whatever as to the condition of my character. Such an assent would be no test of my heart and will. It is written however, that "with the heart we believe unto justice". (Rom. X, 10.) My assent, though reasonable enough, is not a necessary act of my understanding, but involves my will in addition to my understanding. Evidence is ample, yet not compulsory.

Thomas has reason enough to believe. Our Lord had predicted His Resurrection as the very sign of His mission. And now, after the fact, Thomas holds out against witnesses who are both numerous and unanimous. Our Lord has appeared to Mary Magdalen and other holy women, to Peter, to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and to the assembled Apostles; yet Thomas will not accept their statements. He knows that Jesus had been laid in the grave with gaping wounds.

These he must see, these he must touch before he will believe. He will not surrender to authority. He lays down his own narrow terms, betraying by the form of his words, his consciousness that his believing or not, under the circumstances is in his own power. "I will not believe."

II. The Faith of Thomas:—The doubt of Thomas in the reality of the appearance does not, however, separate him from the company of his brother Apostles. He and they are held together by the power of their common love of Christ. So it comes to pass that when, on Sunday night, one week after the Resurrection, the disciples are again within, Thomas is with them. He has rejected the evidence in the face of the Church, and, in the face of the Church, he must confess his faith. Our Lord condescended to Peter, now he condescends to Thomas.

Lo! Jesus comes. He stands among the Apostles in the Supper Room, in His old place. Every eye turns instinctively to Thomas, for the Eyes of His Master are turned to him. It is for him, He has come

tonight. There is the Master before his eyes. It is no phantasm, but His real Self in the flesh. Jesus, unveiling a divine attribute of omniscience, offers him the very evidence he had demanded. "Come hither Thomas, put in thy finger hither, and see my Hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my Side; and be not faithless but believing."

The Apostle does not hesitate, but throws his mind and his heart at the pierced Feet of Jesus with the cry of adoration, "My Lord and my God!" The conversion of Thomas is complete. Yet Our Lord does not bless him as He did Peter after his great confession. He does not answer, "Blessed art Thou, Thomas, because thou hast believed," but only, "Thou hast believed because thou hast seen." The blessing is reserved for those who come to Him, not by sight but by trust on the word of His messengers. Belief cometh by hearing, not by seeing. This must be the blessedness of the millions in the ages to come.

Self-examination: Let me now, under

the eyes of Christ, examine if I seek Him in the spirit of faith. Do I watch the influences that make faith difficult, yielding to flesh and blood which cannot possess the Kingdom of God, to self-indulgent habits which blunt the spiritual preceptions of the soul? These could not have kept St. Thomas from the faith, but they are a danger for me. Do I trust mere mental ability, or do I cultivate the child-like temper, the moral dispositions that predispose to faith and protect it? Do I dabble in books which are above my power of dealing with, and thus create temptations against faith, or do I pray and increase my piety? Am I, while acquiring the science of faith, exercising my intellect at the expense of my faith? Is not this the reason why my lessons are committed to memory as a school task but not impressed on the heart? Do I yield to the craving of an over active imagination which finds fixed and unalterable truth hard to realize, or do I wish to cling as by some hold of sense, to mysteries that are purely spiritual?

When I would approach Our Lord by Meditation or Holy Communion, do I grow disheartened because I can no longer have sensible devotion, wishing with Thomas to touch His wounds to make sure of His Presence, or with Magdalen to hold His Feet with clasped hands so as not to lose Him again?

Petition: Oh keep me, dear Jesus, in the number of those whom Thou hast declared blessed. The light of Thy Countenance has been signed upon me. Let this divine light be more to me than the sight of my eyes or the indulgence of my reason. I have evidence enough to satisfy my reason that it is Thou who dost speak to me through the Church, and this is sufficient. I wish to live by faith. I wish to believe during this life, to see in the world to come. I desire to merit here, to be recompensed hereafter. I wish to know Thee more fully than by reason, and in a better way. Give me now great faith so that I may have a deep vision of Thee in Heaven. Give me the bright, strong faith befitting the priest, who must live and

move in the spiritual world, and sustain the religious life of a whole parish.

Resolutions: I resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to keep my imagination from feverish contagion with the world that lives by sight and reason, and perishes before Thy face.

I will watch with rigid self-scrutiny any stirrings in me of the subtle pride lurking in the reserved and critical scholarship of the day, and avoid the conceit of singularity in my opinions.

I will not ambition, for personal adornment or eager display, the sterile science which feeds not the love of Thee, but, following the traditions of Catholic learning, I will use science to illustrate my faith, minister to my devotion and promote Thy glory. I ask for the spirit of faith which makes men blessed.

Bouquet: "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed."

FATHER JOHN SAMMON

